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CARWIN, THE BILOQUIST,

AND

OTHER AMERICAN TALES

AND PIECES.

BY

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN,

AUTHOR OF

WIELAND, ORMOND, ARTHUR MERVYN,

&c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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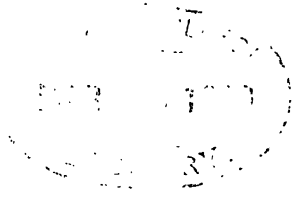

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STEPHEN CALVERT.

CHAPTER XI.

What a state was mine? Sidney's indignation, my cousin's grief, all springing from imputed, but unreal offences of mine; all flowing from the disastrous influence of this stranger! "What can I do," said I, "to shake off this evil?"

"Clelia is said to be criminally connected with another. This assuredly is false. By what illusions could the caution, the discernment, the benevolent reluctance to condemn, of Sidney, have been thus grossly abused? Why did he charge me with deceit and

treachery? I merely asserted that I passed last evening in her company, and this assertion he stigmatized as false!

"Does a traitor lurk in Miss Neville's family? It is composed merely of a female negro, who once belonged to Calverton, whom I freed and recommended to my friend, and her servant Margaret, an Irish woman, whom her aunt met with here and took into her family, and whose good sense, modesty, and discretion, her young mistress had warmly commended. Peggy alone is capable or willing to disclose domestic secrets, and betray her lady."

I proceeded to recollect and revolve all that I had heard of Peggy. I had never directly talked with her. I had merely marked the circumspection and propriety of her silent demeanour. I had questioned Clelia, more than once, as to her character and history, and had been told that she had been some time in America before she had entered Mrs.

Keith's service. That her parents, herself, and one brother, had been Irish emigrants; that the parents were dead, but that the brother dwelt in this city, and pursued the trade of a carpenter.

This brother, whose name was Murphy, and who was a thrifty and honest young man, I was further told, was accustomed to spend his Sunday evenings with his sister in Miss Neville's kitchen, and this was the only associate or acquaintance which Peggy was known to have. Was it possible for surmises and for calumnies to find their way to Sidney's ear through this channel?

No conjecture had more plausibility than this. This man and woman were reported to be honest, but, in this respect, Miss Neville might mistake. Besides, what reason had my heart to rely upon any evidence of Clelia's honesty. I knew my temper to be sanguine, my ignorance and inexperience, to be great.

How should I dissipate this ignorance and restore myself to certainty.

No better scheme occurred to me, none which might be immediately adopted (and my temper could not brook delays) than to seek out Murphy, and, by open or indirect means, endeavour to extort from him the truth. I was personally unknown to him, and might therefore find him unwary and unsuspicious. I might easily so adjust the topics of our discourse as to discover whether he and Sidney were known to, and had any communication with each other. I knew where he lived, and, putting up my horse, hastened towards his work-shop.

Scarcely had I got within sight of it, when I saw at a considerable distance, a person come forth from his house, in whom I instantly recognized Sidney himself. "Ah, ha!" said I, "is not the author of the calumny now discover-

ed? Is not this the channel through which Sidney has obtained his intelligence?"

Sidney did not perceive me, and walked away in a different direction. I proceeded, but on inquiring for Murphy, was informed that he spent the day some miles from town, having a job to execute for Mr. ————, who was building a country house on Delaware. With great reluctance I submitted to defer this desired interview till the evening.

Meanwhile, the impatience of my thoughts was somewhat lightened by indispensable attention to concerns of a general and indifferent nature. I could not but notice the salutary effects of occupation. A vacant mind, a mind that has nothing to divert it from the phantoms of hope and chimeras of fear connected with the future, experiences a kind of insanity. The impulses of love, and freaks of jealousy, are the torments of idleness. They are dreams that affect

us like realities, merely because realities are absent, and we are not able, by comparison, to estimate their shadowy nature.

My business being dispatched before the decline of the sun, my impatience to clear up this mystery revived. Gradually it occurred to me, as the most feasible expedient, to visit Clelia. "Was not Sidney right," said I, "in thinking that the truth would be unavoidably extorted from Miss Neville by abrupt and unexpected questions? Shall I lay before her, without preface or circuity, my knowledge, my doubts, and suspicions? Will she not be surprised into a disclosure of the truth?

"This is earlier than I am accustomed to visit her. Should I go thus early, and enter her apartment unannounced and unbetokened? May not discoveries be made which no regular proceeding would reach? This paramour may not be mere-

ly ideal, and at this moment, they may be together."

I was fired into inexpressible eagerness by this thought. Almost undesignedly I bent my way to the habitation of this girl. I opened the door without warning. As usual the lower apartments and passages were deserted; and, as usual, I went up the stairs leading to the drawing-room; but stimulated, almost without regular thought, by suspicion, I moved slowly. I wished to enter her room without my approach being perceived.

I reached her door. I paused and listened. How was I confounded by distinctly overhearing two voices within, one of them a female's, doubtless Clelia's; the other wanting in feminine fluidity and sweetness, but not distinct enough for either its peculiar tones or words to be heard.

I shuddered at the inference which I could not but draw from an incident

like this! What was to be done? Should I enter or would not the occasion justify me in hesitating and listening? In this, there was meanness and presumption. Perhaps, had leisure to reflect and compare been enjoyed, I should have seen its meanness and forborne it, but now curiosity and anger were imperious. The voice of every foreign consideration was stifled. I bent my ear.

The guilt of the intention I was permitted to incur, but not the profit: for I had just time to discover, to my utter confusion, that the voice within was that of Sidney himself; when motion, as of rising from a chair, convinced me that he was preparing to come out. To be found in this situation would be productive of great and mutual embarrassment, from which I involuntary shrank. Yet how should I elude this consequence?

By hastening out of the house, I could scarcely elude it, for I could not withdraw with so much speed as not to be

overheard, or to attract attention from some one below. At that moment, likewise, I heard footsteps in the passage below, and a voice humming an air. They were those of Peggy.

I hurried to the head of the stair, and, noticing a door a-jar near it, and leading into a room adjoining the drawing-room, I rushed into it. I had no time to look around me, or weigh the dangers that might attend my being found in a bed-chamber.

The persons within parted, and Sidney left the house, while Miss Neville returned to her drawing-room. Had a glimpse of my person been caught by Sidney as he left the drawing-room, had Peggy been busy in this chamber, or had Clelia entered it on parting with her guest, what misconstructions or embarrassments might not thence have arisen! My good fortune, however, had rescued me from this dilemma. I was now at liberty to pass into the hall, and enter

the presence of my friend without the imputation or suspicion of having acted irregularly.

Now, however, new emotions succeeded to those of curiosity or jealousy. Sidney, with his usual unreserve, with his belief of my depravity, with his suspicions of Miss Neville, had sought and obtained a private interview. What effect must such an interview possess upon my happiness, upon her's, upon her good opinion of herself, and her confidence in me: How, in such circumstances, was it my duty, in the approaching interview with her, to demean myself?

No hasty reflection could enable me to judge rightly, and I entered her apartment in a mood made up of apprehension, doubt, and perplexity.

My friend was seated, thoughtfully, at a window. On my opening the door, she raised her eyes. They were full of trouble and disquiet. Never, hitherto, had she cast such looks upon me. Fami-

liarity, tenderness, and joy had flown. Solemnity, reserve, fear, were now strangely but significantly blended in her countenance.

I was astonished and chilled by her demeanour. I had not sufficient courage, though it had been my custom, to salute her. I seated myself in silence.

She at length spoke, but her faultering voice evinced how deeply she was agitated. She frequently stopped, looked at me, at one time with earnestness, at another with shuddering and trepidation.

"Unfortunate was the hour that I was born: disastrous and humiliating has been my life, but I have scarcely known misery till now." There she stopped, and, after an interval of unspeakable distress, resumed:

"Calvert! *Felix* Calvert! I have questions to ask, to which I conjure you to render me faithful answers. Will you?"

"I will."

"My good God! that voice! those looks! how could it be—yet, surely ——." She covered her face and continued:

"When did you—when—did you arrive on these—at this place?"

I mentioned the month and day.

"And whence did you come last?"

From Burlington.

"How long had you resided *there*?"

"Ever since my infancy. All my life, till within the last half year, has been spent here and in Jersey."

Her surprise almost betrayed itself in a shriek. She conjured me to speak true, and repeated the question; to which I made the same answer.

She now apparently convinced, sunk into silence. She covered her eyes with her hands; sighs struggled from the bottom of her heart. I was utterly unable to account for these appearances. I partook of her confusion and sorrow.

At length she recovered sufficient composure to request me to withdraw. She wished to be alone. My presence gave her pain.

I was resolute. I was motionless. She repeated, with augmented vehemence, her request that I would leave her. I ventured at length to solicit an explanation of this scene; to ask, whither her inquiries tended; in what I had offended her?

She answered me by repeating her injunctions to leave her. I had offended in nothing. *She* only was to blame. She had been guilty of negligence, and folly, and rashness, never to be forgiven. From that moment, compassion to herself, justice to me demanded our eternal separation. Never more must she see my face.

Still I lingered in her presence, and renewed my entreaties to know the cause of this deportment. Still she declined any explanation; renewed with aug-

mented vehemence, her assertions of the necessity of my leaving her; of my leaving her for ever.

At length, in the midst of my interrogations, and my disclaimings of any intention to injure or displease her, she burst from me, and shut herself up in her chamber.

I was astonished! thunderstruck! petrified! I had no power, for a time, to leave the room or the house. I strove to awake from what I fondly deemed a fit of madness or an agonizing dream. Thus was I repulsed, cast off, banished, by two beings on whose good opinion my whole happiness reposed; whom I had, indeed, unknown to themselves, treated with meanness, rashness, and duplicity, but who had punished me, if for these offences, with far more severity than they deserved: but not for these offences had they punished me, but for guilt unreasonably imputed; for crimes which I had never committed.

And whence had Miss Neville's newly born antipathy flowed but from the presumptuous and detestable interference of Sidney? Had he not laid open to her the calumnies poured out against her? Had he not informed her of the existence, the excellences, the expectations, and the rights of my cousin, and thus raised an insuperable impediment between us? Was not this the source of her alarm and her grief.

To wait for, or solicit an interview with Clelia was in vain. She had seen me for the last time. My presence was an insupportable evil. It wounded more deeply than the adder's tongue, or the point of a sword. It became me, it was my indispensable duty to withdraw; and whither should I withdraw but to Sidney's, to wrest from him an explanation of this scene, and to avenge or upbraid him for his perfidy and inhumanity.

Sidney was at home, and readily admitted me. As I approached him, my

eyes flashed indignation, but his sedateness and tranquillity were invincible. I spoke in rage, and incoherently, but he readily comprehended the purpose of my coming, and, seizing a pause afforded him by my exhausted breath, rather than by my abated anger, he said:

"I am glad you are come, Felix. So far from acting in fear of your knowledge, I would gladly, had I known where to meet with you, have disclosed to you my purpose of visiting this lady, and have induced you to go along with me. I sought you at your lodgings and elsewhere, and found you not; but now permit me to tell you what has passed between us. Your approbation of my conduct, I fervently desire, but do not expect. I will be contented with my own, in which, when reflection and experience have opened your eyes, I doubt not of obtaining your concurrence.

"When admitted to her presence, I made my apology, and effected my intro-

duction by simply stating the motives of my visit. These were to know and to communicate the truth. I painted your situation and your character, and those of your cousin. I recounted the intelligence gained from Mr. L*** and from other quarters respecting herself, and endeavoured, by being thoroughly in earnest, and by boundless sincerity, to convince her of the rectitude of my motives in acting thus, and of the interest which I felt in her welfare, in your cousin's welfare, and in your's.

"I have reason to believe that she was convinced of my integrity; for she listened to me patiently. She upbraided me not. She flew not into anger. She was, indeed, deeply, variously, and, in some respects, mysteriously affected. She was visibly shocked by the imputation contained in the Irish letter."

Eagerly, I said, "Did she deny their truth."

"No. It was the emotion of surprise

and horror, but I cannot say of conscious guilt, yet not of conscious innocence. It was, indeed, inexplicable. It left me power to infer nothing. I put no direct questions. I left her at liberty, by expressing my wishes that the charge should prove false, and by pausing, to vindicate herself; but she did not speak. She trembled and wept, but said nothing to confirm or confute the story.

"Finding her in this mood, I rose to leave her, but first repeated what my compassion dictated. I know not, said I, how my conduct on this occasion may appear to you. Your silence and distress do not inform me whether I have been deceived or not, with respect to you. Of that, I must go away ignorant; but, on every supposition, I wish to be your friend. I wish to serve you; is there no way in which I can serve you?"

"Yes," said she, with vehemence, "You can serve me, but only in one way; by finding out Mr. Calvert, and acquaint-

ing him with my resolution never to see him more. By prevailing with him to desist from attempting, to desist from even wishing ever to see me again. That is the only good that you can render me, the only good that I can receive at your hands."

"And that," said I, "I will endeavour to do. Saying this, I left her, and have since been looking for you, though in vain. I see, by your manner, that you have had an interview with her, and that her behaviour at this interview has been such as she gave me reason to expect. For her sake, for both your sakes, I rejoice at it.

"You are angry with me for marring your visionary schemes of happiness. This happiness you have endeavoured to build upon falshood and deception. So short-sighted were you, as not to see the incurable frailty, the tottering structure of such schemes. Whence you contracted this vice, this stupidity, is incon-

ceivable to me. How could you derive content from being esteemed more highly than you were conscious of deserving; how you could acquiesce in being looked upon as something different from yourself; what views could induce you to conceal your history, the existence of your mother and your cousin, and, possibly, impose upon her a tale utterly false, is a subject of the most painful astonishment.

"To imagine that the time and the course of events would not betray you—how could you imagine it? How could you desire to postpone the discovery.

"Did I not know your past life, your education, and your friends, the character of your tutor and your mother, my surprise would be less. But the world is eternally producing what, to our precipitate judgment, are prodigies, anomalies, monsters. Innate, dastardly, sordid wickedness frequently springs up where genial temperature and wise culture had

promised us the most heavenly products. The ruffian and sensualist are fashioned by the discipline intended, and, as the fond preceptor dreams, adapted to produce nothing but generous magnanimity and heroism."

These accents, solemnly and calmly uttered, chilled me to the soul. They carried instantaneous and humiliating conviction to my heart. The virtuous upbraiding of this man had a sympathetic influence. It changed me into as profound a wonderer, as immeasurable a contemner of my conduct, as himself. My anger melted into contrition. My confidence was changed to dismay. I hung my head, and listened to his rebukes in silence.

He perceived these appearances, and went on in a tone of somewhat less severity: "Perhaps I have been too hasty and censorious. I know not all your motives. I can judge very superficially concerning you. I have made myself

the arbiter of your conduct, not from insolence or envy, but because I love your cousin, and am anxious for your happiness; but, in exercising this office, I may, in my turn, and in consequence of erroneous observation, have judged wrong. Will you trust me with your thoughts? Will you relate to me the motives of your conduct towards this woman? No crime has been committed, I persuade myself, which cannot be atoned for; no evil is incurred which cannot be removed."

I had no power to confess my misdeeds. I merely acknowledged the truth of his suspicions in general, and admitted that I had been very faulty, faulty to a degree for which inexperience and youth, and a sanguine temper, afforded no apology. Yet I averred the innocence, in one respect, of my intercourse with Miss Neville. I had entertained no infamous views. I had never sought to obtain favours which her matrimonial obligations forbade. I had no reason to

imagine, from any particulars in our exclusive intercourse, that insinuation or artifice, had they been exerted for this end, would ever have been crowned with success.

I had, indeed, deceived both her and my cousin. I had studiously misled them as to my actual situation, and the motives of my conduct. Not by silence and concealment merely, but by positive untruths had I misled them. My remorse extorted from me thus much, but I meant not to claim his forgiveness. I had deeply offended my cousin, as well as my friend, and neither expected nor sought my restoration to their good opinion. I would instantly retire to the country, to my mother, and prevail upon her to consent to my going to Europe. My conduct, hitherto, had been base and inglorious, indolent and visionary. Henceforth, I would play a different part; and shaking off these sordid fetters, be active, independent, and wise. I would leave

these shores, and they should never hear from me. I would never return till — till my virtue was established on the basis of knowledge and experience.

Sidney now assumed an air of sprightliness and benignity, and, taking my hand, said, "I partly commend your scheme, Felix, but you need not overrate your offence. You have done nothing for which you may not be forgiven. To see the impropriety of your conduct in its true light, is a sufficient title to my esteem. It will be a valid claim to your cousin's. I highly approve of your design to go to Burlington, for your mother and your mother's affairs have wanted you too long, and retirement and reflection, I hope, will be of service to you; but, meanwhile, you must go with me to my sister Wallace's. We must see Louisa together, and, if possible, establish affairs upon their old footing."

He quickly convinced me that he was thoroughly in earnest in this generous

proposal, and I accompanied him with a strange revolution and turbulence of feelings. So much unexpectedness, such total novelty in my new circumstances, such quick transitions from one state of mind to another the most opposite, from fear to courage, from despondency to hope, from self-upbraiding to the whispering of applause, — made me, in my own eyes, a paradox, a miracle, a subject of incessant curiosity and speculation. The present condition of my thoughts and feelings was not merely a variation or succession, but the utter reverse of the last. In the short minute I had passed in Sidney's company, I had emerged from agony to joy; from despair to exultation.

"I bring you," said Sidney to my cousin, as he approached her in a lonely spot in the garden, "a penitent; a youth, erring through precipitation and passion, and deserving to be pitied and pardoned. He promises to be cautious for the future, and

I have no doubt of his amendment. Come, give him your hand to kiss, and make him once more your own."

She looked at each of us wistfully, by turns, and, at length, exclaimed, "And do *you* forgive him? Has he justified himself to *you*?"

"He has condemned himself to me. He has acknowledged his error, and that is sufficient. At present, we can ask no more. His conduct must confirm or confute his promises; and, on his sincerity, meanwhile, we must be contented to rely."

"That is, indeed, sufficient. If you think him deserving, joyfully shall I again admit him to my heart." Stretching her arms towards me, she allowed me to salute her with my former tenderness. She admitted the propriety of my returning to Burlington, and on that very day I set out, my cousin readily assenting to hold a correspondence with me.

CHAPTER XII.

In this tumult of passions and rapid succession of events, my mind knew no pause, my feelings no permanence. It was not till I had passed the bounds of the city, and once more beheld the tranquil scenery and verdure, and noted the general repose of nature, that I was able to survey the late transactions with unmisty sight.

I was now going to the quiet mansion of my mother, with the feverish and motley images produced by the experience of the last three months, during which I had lived longer, if I may so speak, had admitted more ideas and more emotions, than during the whole period of my preceding life.

The theatre on which I had entered of a noisy and busy city was as opposite as possible to the little circuit of my juvenile existence, the grass-plot, and the tulip-bed. The condition of proprietor of spacious fields, and the master of a numerous household at Calverton, was equally new; but the new impulses of the heart, the new exertions of the intellect, and the new gratifications of curiosity, which my late situation had produced, were perplexing by their number and variety, and astounding by their magnitude.

The character and demeanour of Sidney and my cousin, of the Wallaces, and particularly of Miss Neville, passed in review before me. I distributed them in my memory as if they had been arranged in a book, and turned to this or that leaf, pondered on this adventure or that dialogue, and caused, with additional hues and adjuncts, all my recent ideas to pass, and all my emotions to be felt again.

Fortunately, perhaps, for me, or at least as I then considered it, my mother had gone to pass a fortnight or more, at the residence of one of her friends, ten or twelve miles distant from Burlington. No one was at home but a female servant and an old negro, who was family property, and who assisted me in the court and garden.

My mother's curiosity would have occasioned much embarrassment. She would have justly deemed herself entitled to know more of my transactions during my absence than I should have been willing to disclose. My behaviour would have been the subject of her anxious and constant scrutiny. A thousand misgivings and perpetual consciousness would have betrayed themselves to her vigilant eye. I was pleased that her absence took place at this time, and looked forward to my solitude, my woodland walks, and my unfrequented garden, as particularly propitious to that intense

musing to which I determined to devote myself.

Having returned home, and resumed my ordinary habits, I began, as I have just described, to ruminate on the past. In this employment, I found a plenteous source of humiliation and perplexity. Two incidents, particularly, at this time, arrested my attention. The first was the charge urged with so much confidence against Miss Neville, by Sidney, of nightly admitting the visits of a paramour, with whom she had intercourse in her native country. The next was the imputation of *lying*, which he had fixed upon me, in relation to the manner in which I had spent a certain evening.

I now remembered very mysterious words which he had used on that occasion, and of which, in the hurry of my thoughts at the time, I had neglected to ask for further explanation. "Had you," said he, "been at her door, instead of *pushing pieces of wood over a chec-*

quered table."—Then, on my affirming that I was, in reality, seated at that very time near her, he started, refused credit to my declaration; called me villain and deceiver! What was meant by this?

Sidney was not easy of faith, especially when the tale was injurious to the fame of another. His information, whether true or false, could not but have flowed from specious sources. Had I not nearly lighted on the source, and why did my infatuation forbear to prosecute the search still farther? I was within sight of the goal, when I allowed my attention to be drawn aside.

I was no player at chess. At draughts I had some skill, but had never played, nor even seen the game played by others, during my absence from Burlington. My company had always been the Wallaces, Clelia, and my cousin; and my mind had always been too full of occupation, too busy in suspense, too engrossed by pas-

sion, to endure the tameness and monotony of the draught-board.

Rage at my own negligence, impatience to repair its effects, began to grow in my bosom. "Shall I not," said I, "return this hour to the city, seek out Sidney, and obtain from him a full disclosure? Shall I not visit Louisa, and extort from her the cause of her indignation and aversion, so disproportioned, as it now seems, to my offence; so abrupt; so enigmatical; and rush into the presence of Clelia, lay before her the aspersions of her enemies, and wrest from her, by impetuosity irresistible, the cause of her deportment to me at our last meeting? A few hours will bear me thither, and a few hours restore me again to my home."

This impatience was counteracted by other thoughts. At parting from my cousin, I had solemnly avowed my resolution to absent myself from the city during the

ensuing month. Would not my return so abruptly and so adversely to expectation, give weight to the charge of fickleness or dissimulation, of disregard to promises, and of trampling on my honour?

May not this end be partly accomplished by a letter in which my perplexities respecting the mysterious expressions of Sidney my be mentioned, and a solution of the enigma demanded? Pleased with this scheme, I wrote forthwith. Having taken up the pen, I did not feel disposed to be brief. My heart was pierced by remorse; by newborn sensibility of my cousin's excellencies; by gratitude for her affection. My pen was pregnant with the emotions of my heart, and a thousand things did I say, a thousand incidents relate in this letter, which, before I began it, I was far from designing or expecting to disclose.

I felt a sort of generous pride in self-censure, in even painting my behaviour in darker colours than it merited, in

assigning worse motives than truth required, and omitting alleviating circumstances. I seemed to be fated never to hit the just mean, and to carry generosity to as culpable and mischievous an excess now, as vanity had ever been carried before.

The letter was sent. I could not sleep till the answer arrived. I had besought her to inform herself on the points in which I wished for information, and to forward her reply with speed. At any rate, to reply without delay, since many topics of my letter required no deliberation, and no time but that which pen work demanded.

No answer came. The sun arose and went down, my customary avocations were neglected, my impatience threw me into tremours. I inquired at the usual depository for letters in vain. Four days passed and no letter had been sent, or what was sent had miscarried or been intercepted.

I wrote again, and importuned with new vehemence and much upbraiding, for an answer. In reply to this, after the tormenting delay of five days, the following letter was delivered:

"To Felix Calvert.

"I did not expect, Felix, to write to you. Your two letters I received in due time, and merely write, at present, to prevent you from sending a third. If you do, I shall tear it into pieces, or throw it into the fire unread.

"Unhappy Calvert! What smiling prospects were thine! How eager was I once to link mine with thy destiny! Yet, if my precipitation had not been benevolently thwarted and restrained, what misery for my future years should I have laid up in store!

"Write not to me; talk not to me; lay aside even the wish to see me again; it cannot be gratified without giving me

more anguish than my worst enemy can wish to give me.

"While memory, while conscience is with you, you cannot be at a loss why I write thus. You cannot but know your own unworthiness. All this parade of sincerity! all these confessions! so seemingly mimute! so apparently dictated by remorse! and yet false, cunning, deceitful! O! how my heart loathes, how it abhors a deceiver!

"And stupid as deceitful! Wandering into these crooked paths when the forthright path is so smooth, conspicuous, and accessible! How deeply rooted must be that wickedness, how near to madness must be that folly, of which thy good name and my peace are the victims! Farewell, Felix.

"I take up the pen again to ask—for, possibly—yet, it cannot be. Nothing can I expect but asseverations, which add to thy guilt. Thou wilt not scruple to affirm what is false; thou will not scruple to swear.

"O! wretch! wretch!—But I will not upbraid you. I leave you to the stings of your own conscience. Again, farewell. L. CALVERT.

"Wretch! wretch!" indeed! Here is an entangling net, spread by some secret and flagitious hand for my ruin. To burst its threads is the privilege of that innocence that never stooped from its sunny elevation, that never was enervated by conscious guilt.

What can be meant? Some new offence it must be. It cannot be the mere disclosure of the charge urged against me by Sidney. It cannot be some new aggravation of that charge; for, was not that included in the pardon so generally bestowed on me?

I have it. In my last letter, I pretended to disclose my whole guilt, and, in truth, I did disclose it. Nay, I exaggerated my transgressions, but I said nothing, since nothing could be said, to

justify the imputations of Sidney in that mysterious interview. On the contrary, I mentioned them, not merely to express my innocence, but to importune for knowledge of their meaning. Fraught with conviction of my guilt in that instance, this importunity and this inquiry must have looked, to them, like proofs of the last and most profligate degree of impudence.

Shall I be still? Shall I suffer time to disclose their error? Shall I wrap myself up in conscious innocence, and wait till time has rectified their mistake, and they seek my presence to expiate, by prayer and entreaty, the injuries which their easy faith, their precipitate suspicions, have done me?

No; I have not intellectual force enough for that. The gratifications of that revenge would be delicious, but I cannot wait for it. I cannot endure to be deemed a guilty wretch by beings like Louisa Calvert and Sidney. That is the

worst of evils.—I broke from this soliloquy to mount my horse, and set out that very hour for the city.

I first went to Wallace's. I saw Mrs. Wallace. She regarded me with looks in which contempt was mingled with sorrow. I inquired for my cousin. She was gone to Lancaster. She had returned home.

This was an unexpected and stunning blow. I stayed not to parley, but instantly resolved to find out Sidney. I was admitted to his presence. He looked at me with coldness and solemnity.

I threw my cousin's letter before him. I desired him to read it, and to explain the contents.

He cast his eye on the first line, and then, putting it aside, said, sedately, "I have read it."

"You have read it? And know what it means? If you do, I swear by Him that made me, that your knowledge exceeds mine."

He started at my emphatic manner, and said, with glances of anger, "Oaths, Felix, are not made to sport with. They are needless, at least, on this occasion."

"Will you explain to me the meaning of this letter? You have read it, it seems, and perhaps dictated it."

He looked at me again, with solemn benignity! "It stands in no need of explanation."

"And you will not give me any."

He paused for some time, and then spoke: "Felix! this demand is strange, but I will comply with it. On the evening of the Saturday before you left town, you were seen in a tavern in this city. There it was you spent the evening. Yet you afterwards affirmed upon oath, that you spent it with Miss Neville. You left the city promising an absence of some weeks, yet in a few days you clandestinely returned, and renewed your commerce with this foreigner. You skulked all day in a sordid inn of the suburbs, and

stole to the place of assignation by night, in a contemptible but ineffectual disguise: yet you wrote letters to your cousin, as if from Burlington, pretending the deepest compunction for past misdeeds, and promising wondrous reformations for the future."

"And this," said I, with a contemptuous and bitter smile, "is the explanation of this letter. This charge, false in every part, in every word of it, you have whispered to my cousin. Thus you have tainted her heart, and turned her affections away from me; but be it so. If your credulity is so great as to confide in such lame and ambiguous evidence as that on which a falshood like this must rest; if your regard for me is so small as not to make you seek for my vindication from my own lips; if she is feeble and absurd enough to lend implicit ears to your tale, ye are both worthless. I cast ye off for ever. Henceforth, I seek a different society—a new world." In say-

ing this, my eyes, fixed stedfastly on those of my companion, flashed indignation, and my gestures gave force to the accents that fell from my lips.

The countenance of Sidney assumed an expression impossible to be described. He looked at me, but not as before. After a moment's pause he turned from me in silence, and left the room. There was nothing to detain me in it.

My resolution was now taken. Unhappily for me, external circumstances were favourable to the execution of a scheme dictated by rashness and want of foresight. A ship bound for Ireland, lay at this moment in a cove near the mouth of the Schuylkill. Without preparation, without reflection, without delay, I put myself on board of her. In a few hours she hoisted sail, and in less than two days, left the coast of America. As its sandy heights faintly gleamed in the horizon, I exclaimed, "Farewell, my native land, farewell for ever!"

Now was I a wanderer on the great deep, unaided by the impulse of courage, and unguided by the rudder of discretion. My voyage was begun in a moment of blind passion, with no suitable provision of any kind, either against the exigencies of my voyage, or against those which could not fail to beset me on my landing on a foreign shore. I had never thought of these. Resentment and despair, the wrongs imagined to be done by Sidney and my cousin, engrossed my thoughts, and excluded all those considerations, that, in any other mind, would have probably obtained the chief place.

These ebullitions, however, subsided in a short time. The novelty and danger of my new situation quickly rushed on my mind. I became timorous, forlorn, and panic-struck. I looked around me on the boundless and turbulent expanse of waters, on the wide interval that severed me from my native country, and which hourly grew wider; on the long,

long way that lay before me, with sensations of melancholy not to be expressed.

These were soon changed for worse sensations. I was attacked with sea-sickness, and all its horrors. This completed the conquest of my courage. The breeze with which we left the coast, soon increased to a storm. Dangers of a strange and unforeseen kind encompassed me on all sides, and I began bitterly to lament my undertaking, which now appeared in its true colours to my awakened reason.

What, said I, will the gentle and affectionate Louisa think, when she hears of my sudden flight. Deceived by atrocious, but plausible charges, will she not consider this a confirmation of them all? How will she deplore the fate of the ill-starred Felix, and add those fears for his personal safety, naturally flowing from the knowledge when it reaches her, of my headlong scheme, to those regrets already inspired by my defection from virtue! Was this the conduct which it

became me to pursue, either as conscious of my own integrity, and anxious for the purity of my fame, or as grateful for the love which this angel among women bore me, and solicitous to secure her happiness; that happiness which is entangled with mine?

And my mother! who feared nothing more than my voyage to Europe; whose felicity depended, not on my safety merely from perils and temptations, but on my presence. How will she feel when apprised of this rash act? I picture to myself her surprise, her indignation, and her sorrow. Methought I heard, in my short and unquiet sleep, the voice of her upbraiding; her charge of ingratitude; and when she comes to know the suspicions of my cousin and of Sidney, how will she mourn over the guilt of her idolized child! How will all her hopes with regard to me, expire and become extinct!

These images were excruciating. The sensations they produced were not to be

endured. Added to the dangers and horrors of my actual condition, they inspired the most dismal and soul-sickening despondency. I grew impatient of existence, and entreated those near me to drag me from my hammock, and throw me into the sea.

We had now been three weeks at sea. The blustering atmosphere with which we set out, became daily more tempestuous, till, at length, it rose to an hurricane. Our vessel was old, crazy, and in ill condition. The buffeting of the waves quickly produced a leak, which, for a time was not formidable, but grew finally too much for the strength of a harassed and terrified crew. Incessant pumping did not prevent the slow increase of the water in the hold, and, at length, it was evident that the ship must sink.

In this desperate situation, and before our fate was quite finished, a vessel, which came in sight, generously offered the assistance of which we stood in so much

need. They took the crew and passengers on board, and the ship soon after disappeared. I was so reduced by mental distress and sea-sickness, that they were obliged to carry me in their arms from my birth to the boat. This was a large, stout ship, bound from l'Orient to Baltimore.

This transition may be supposed to have had a powerful effect on me. I was now, in spite of contrary expectations and designs, returning to that country which I had abandoned. Heaven had interfered with a benignity to which my merits gave no claim, to obviate the effects of my rashness. The storm speedily abated, and clear skies, smooth seas, a propitious gale, and the prospect of restoration to a home that now was as dear, as it had formerly been hateful to me, dissipated my malady, and gave vigour to my hopes.

On the day that I landed at Baltimore, I hired a horse, and proceeded, with the utmost expedition, to Philadelphia. It was not till my near approach to that city,

that I began to ponder on the perplexities of my situation, and revolve the means of escaping them. Sidney and my cousin, it was plain, were strongly prepossessed with the notion of some guilt, which, in truth, I never had committed. This guilt was of no common or excusable kind, and my mother was, probably, ere this, infected with the same suspicions. First, said I, I will go to Sidney; him I will detain and interrogate, and leave no obscurity unremoved. My mother and my cousin shall be sought for anon, and Sidney's commendations shall attend my appeal to their forgiveness.

I entered the city in the dusk of the evening, and alighting at the inn where my horse used to be kept, proceeded, without delay, to Sidney's lodgings. His mother, sisters, and himself, were abroad, but were expected shortly to return. I resolved to wait his return, and seated myself in the apartment which he used for business and study. My mind was

deeply occupied in ruminating on the doubtful prospects before me, when Sidney entered the house. I heard him inquire of the servant if any message had been left for him in his absence, and her answer that Mr. Calvert staid for him in the study.

"Calvert!" said he, "can that be possible?"

I wondered not at these expressions, or the tone with which they were accompanied; and yet, methought, they denoted not so much surprise as might have been expected from an incident so unlooked for as my return. Of my departure, all my friends could not fail of being apprised, by the measures which I took for that end, in a very short time after it happened. Sidney's tone, however, if it had little surprise in it, had no pleasure, and this I did not expect from his known benevolence of temper.

He entered the room, advanced toward me with a cheerful brow, and offered me

his hand, saying, "This return is unexpectedly soon, Calvert. I am pleased that it has happened so; nevertheless I hope you bring good news with you."

This reception was embarrassing; but Sidney's behaviour had ever been too little agreeable to my habits, to warrant me in wondering at any of his actions. And yet, thought I, this is strongly inconsistent with his deportment at our parting interview; but, perhaps, somewhat has happened to clear up the mistakes under which he then laboured.

My embarrassment was increased by his immediately entering into general conversation, as if nothing extraordinary had happened. After a few remarks, he seemed to notice my embarrassment, and asked:

"You are uneasy and reserved, my friend; surely, it is time to lay aside solicitudes which can answer no useful purpose. I thought you too wise to be in any situation unhappy. Come, what is it

you think of? Be it good or ill it is politic to let it forth?"

The surprise which I felt at these words, suggested the thought that possibly my voyage had been hitherto unknown to Sidney. I now looked wistfully at him and said:

"Surely, my friend, you cannot be at a loss as to my cause of uneasiness. You cannot but be aware of the effect which such deportment as yours is likely to have upon me."

"Indeed I am," said he, without any change of his tone. "I cannot conceive why my behaviour should give birth to any uncommon feelings. I thought, when we last saw each other, that a perfect understanding was established between us."

"That," interrupted I, "is the cause of my present embarrassment. Recollecting your behaviour then, and the conduct which I immediately adopted, and

comparing that with present appearances, I confess I am sunk into perplexities."

"What!" said he, with more surprise than he had hitherto disclosed, "I do not comprehend you? Our parting was surely what it ought to have been."

"Indeed," said I, discouraged by this assertion, "I was persuaded by your present deportment, to hope that your opinion in that respect was changed."

"More and more do you surprise me," said he: I repeat that I do not comprehend you."

"Surely, surely, you can be no stranger to the rash, the desperate act to which your treatment and my cousin's urged me."

"Rash and desperate? What do you mean?"

"Good Heaven? then you know not yet—Yet my sudden return may well have contradicted your former intelligence. You knew not of my actual embarkation for Europe."

To describe the changes which now took place in Sidney's countenance is impossible. He started, and putting his face close to mine, eagerly scrutinized my features. He then withdrew his attention; and all his faculties seemed locked up in astonishment and satisfaction.

A pause, on both sides, ensued.

Meanwhile, I, on my part, knew not what to think. His ignorance as to my frustrated voyage was apparent; and yet, why should he be astonished or pleased at my return, and why not manifest this state of mind sooner?

Sidney continued silent. His bosom seemed to labour with some great thought. His eye, fixed on the floor, was void of *speculation*. A kind of self-debating; a weighing of different measures was apparent in his countenance. Every other emotion in my heart gave way to curiosity. At length I said:

"Reflecting on the manner in which

we parted, five weeks ago, in this very room, I cannot but be surprised at your present demeanour. Then all was recrimination and anger, now you seem to be my friend. I did not merit any thing but friendship at your hands, and your and my cousin's indignation at imaginary transgressions, awakened the same sentiment in my breast. Hence the sudden adoption of my scheme, which I have been happily prevented from accomplishing by the untowardness of the winds and waves. Has any thing happened, may I ask, in my absence, to change your opinion of me?"

Sidney now looked on me with beaming benignity. "There has," said he, with emphasis; appearances deceived me; but such appearances that mere humanity could not fail to be misled by them. I ask not your pardon. I confess not any prejudice or haste in judging. Circumstances being as they then were, I was right in deciding as I did; but

these are now past. Sincerely do I rejoice to see you. So saying, he arose and embraced me. "But let me ask," continued he, "whence came you? I supposed you to be half over the Atlantic by this time."

"Indeed!" interrupted I, "then you know that I embarked for Ireland?"

"Certainly. It was known to all your friends, a few hours after you went on board."

"And my mother ——"

"Will be made happy by the sight of you. But how came this?"

I then gave him a summary account of my disasters. The attempt to do this, and the countenance of Sidney, luminous with pleasure, insensibly opened my heart. I averred to him my innocence of those offences, whatever they were, with which he and my cousin had charged me. I recounted all the rueful thoughts that beset my pillow, during my outward voyage. I concluded with inquiries re-

specting my mother's and my cousin's welfare.

"They are well," said he; "they have only commiseration and regret on your account, which your return will dissipate. They acquit you of all blame, except on account of the temerity and precipitation of your last scheme, which your juvenile inexperience, and the passionate impetuosity of your character, will somewhat palliate. Your mother and cousin will be to-morrow or next day in this city."

I expressed my delight at this news, and my resolution to set out for Burlington immediately.

"No," said he, gravely, "that must not be."

I was somewhat startled, and inquired into the reason of his prohibition.

"I want to tell you," he replied, "something of great moment for you to know before your introduction to your friends. Meanwhile, I will ease their cares and suspenses by a note." He took

up pen, and wrote the following billet to my mother:

"Let me make you happy, dear madam, in the information of the safe return of your errant son. The vessel in which he embarked foundered at sea; but the crew and passengers escaped to another, by which they were brought to Baltimore, whence your son has this moment arrived; he longs to pay his duty to you, but as I have much to say to him before your interview, and as you expect so soon to be in town, I have persuaded him to wait your coming."

"This letter," said he, "with a confirmatory postscript from yourself, if you please, we will send by a special messenger early in the morning. Meanwhile, I I must tell you what has happened. Strange incidents they are, and such as, I believe, have now occurred, for the first time, in the history of human beings.

But I need not relate them by word of mouth. Your hand rests upon a book in which the narrative is contained in a more satisfactory form than I can now bestow on it. The book contains transcripts of all the letters that have passed between your cousin and me during your absence. You may read them. You will find laid open in them, all the heart of the writers, and every information respecting what has happened which you stand in need of.

"I must be gone an hour on some urgent business, and will leave you to this employment." So saying, Sidney left me, and I eagerly opened the manuscript.

CHAPTER XIII.

The letters, for I afterwards read them over so often as at length to have them by rote, were in these words.

Letter I.

To Louisa Calvert.

"Be not too much surprised and grieved, my friend. The event I am going to relate, I own, disconcerted and distressed me for a time, but I now think of it with little discomposure. On the whole, it is, I persuade myself, the best that could have happened.

"*Hector* has just been with me. He brought a letter for Mrs. Calvert from

Felix, who, at four o'clock Tuesday evening, went on board the Swiftsure, bound for Cork. This vessel had been wind-bound for some time. Hector accompanied his master on board, and left not the ship till she was under sail, the wind becoming favourable a little before. He was charged to detain this letter till Saturday, and then bring it to me. You see the boy has faithfully adhered to his master's directions. This delay was, no doubt, enjoined, in order to preclude any measures for effecting his return.

Let me repeat to you my counsel, not to be distressed. At least, let not this aggravate the sorrow you already feel. In this act there is no guilt. There is temerity, perhaps, and indiscretion in it, but no more than this inconsiderate and headstrong youth had given us full reason to expect.

"No doubt he is at this moment bitterly deploring his own rashness, and tormenting himself with the thoughts of

what misery the tidings of his flight will produce to you and to his mother. But these will be passing evils. Doubtless he has carried money with him, and will easily find out his Lancashire cousin, by whom all deficiencies in purse or in knowledge will be readily supplied. Let not, I once more repeat, let not this incident afflict you too much. I always told you that the youth, in spite of all his faults, will do well at last. I am still as much of this opinion as ever.

"I weep to think on his poor mother's astonishment and affliction. That Felix could not paint to himself what that could be, and be inspired, by such images, with a different resolution, is truly wonderful. Tell me, as soon as possible, your thoughts upon this event. S. C."

Letter II.

To the same.

"Overpowered as I am with surprise and vexation, I know not that I ought to write to you, but the employment is salutary. I have always found that the most efficacious consolation to ourselves, is the attempt to console another; and this letter may afford new proof of my opinion.

"I told you, three days ago, that our Felix had embarked for Europe. Such was Hector's testimony: such was the assurance of the letter brought by the servant for his mother. She has written to me since, inclosing her son's epistle in her own. It is an eloquently incoherent composition, dictated, as it seems, by hostile passions and fluctuating purposes. It avers his innocence of what we laid to his charge, declares that his

letter to you contains the whole truth of his offences, foresees and deprecates his mother's grief, and defends and accuses himself in the same breath. In short, it is a letter which only Calvert, and, I was going to add, an innocent man could write.

"But now, Lucy, what have I to tell you! The lad is *not gone*. He is still in this city: still harboured in Walden's tavern. I discovered it last night. Thus it was:

"I was called to draw up the will of a dying man in Southwark. It was eight o'clock in the evening, but the moonlight made every object distinct. I walked pretty fast, the case being desperate, and was accompanied by the messenger. Crossing Pine-street, at its junction with Front-street, I saw before me, crossing Front-street and going down Pine-street towards the water, a figure, whom, to mistake for any other than our Felix was impossible. My way

lay down Front-street, but in spite of that occasion which required my presence elsewhere, I turned and followed him.

"He turned Penn-street corner toward the south. I mended my pace so as to come very close to him, and take such a survey of his person, as might annihilate all fallacy. He looked not back, but walked as fast as I, and presently turned into Walden's, the very house in which I had before alighted on him.

"I now pursued my first purpose, resolving, on my return, to stop at this house, and, if possible, to procure an interview with this mysterious youth. My business was not speedily accomplished with the sick man. I did not leave his house till past ten; but, so much the better, thought I, it is still more likely that I shall meet my fugitive, as he will be returned for the night.

"I looked carefully round me in the public room at Walden's, but could not

discover Felix among any of the groupes. Thus unsuccessful, nothing remained but to make the obvious inquiries of Walden himself. I have long had a slight acquaintance with this man.

"By his answers to my inquiries I found the name and situation of his guest were well known to him. Felix, he told me, had lodged at his house during the last fortnight. During this time he spent the day usually abroad, but returned hither in the evening. He had left him the day before, and had come in an hour or two before my visit, and settled his bill. Having done this, he had gone out again, and he had no expectation of again seeing his guest.

"How," I asked the man, "did he discover Calvert's name?"

"Why," said he, "one day, a month or two ago, I was dealing with a black fellow in the market for some baskets of fruit, when this young man came up, and, speaking to the black, asked him some

questions about Calverton, and directed the black to have certain things prepared against such a time, when he expected to bring several friends down who would be likely to spend the night there. I knew what and where Calverton was well enough, for who does not? and I had often had dealings for market stuff with the same Dominic. I knew the last owner, and supposed that this might be the young man I heard he left the estate to. I looked at him narrowly, and when his back was turned, asked the negro who it was. He said it was his master, Felix Calvert. When he first came to my house, I knew him again in a moment, though he was not dressed over and above nice, and I wondered that he should come to such a house as mine for a lodging; but that, you know, was none of my business. I remember, when I first called him by his name, he stared at me as if he wondered how I should have found it out."

"As to what was Calvert's motive for residing here, how his days were employed, and who were his associates, Walden was totally uninformed; and I left him, plunged in the most painful perplexity.

"Clelia has actually left the city three days ago; for I called on her again, resolved to extort from her some explanation of this mystery. I found the doors and window-shutters closed and fastened, and no sign of an inhabitant within.

"I am greatly disturbed. I know not whether to mention to you a suggestion that has lately occurred. I would willingly spare you needless inquietudes, but I hope I may rely, in every vicissitude, on your strength of mind. Hitherto I have always had reason to rely upon it.

"Calvert's conduct has lately been inexplicable. I cannot account for it on any of the ordinary principles of human action. Misguided passions make many

a man a paradox; but the passions, in their wildest energy, produce uniform appearances.

"I now look back, with somewhat different eyes, upon my late interview with Calvert. I recollect his visible sincerity in denying my insinuations of falsehood; the tenour of his copious letter to you, and of that to his mother; the suddenness of his resolution to embark for Europe, and this lying incognito in a city where it is impossible that he should not be noticed by some friend or acquaintance.

"Putting these things together, I have admitted a suspicion—yet I am loth, while I cannot forbear to admit it. No less averse am I to mention it, plausible as it now appears.

"But if this suspicion be true, we have hitherto acted most unwisely and unfortunately.

"I am now earnestly desirous of meeting this youth, yet know not where

to look for him. I have wandered the streets the better part of this day. I have been to all the places where he might possibly be found. I have inquired of the market-coming Dominic, and been more than once at Walden's. No tidings of him. Perhaps he has left the city. Perhaps he has gone to Burlington.

"I will write again shortly — have I, have I not intelligence——

S. C."

Letter III.

To the same.

"I write again, as I promised you, but with intelligence that will call forth all your astonishment, and, I fear, though unreasonably, all your grief.

"Last night, after I had written to you, I walked out. That, you know, is my refuge from care. When any thing takes fast hold of my mind, and demands my meditations, I must walk. Since

Woodward's garden has been open to all strollers, I usually betake myself to one of its embowered walks.

"I had scarcely entered the garden, which, notwithstanding the radiance and mildness of the evening, had only two or three persons in it, when I saw, seated on a bench, in the broadest moon-shine, Felix Calvert! I passed him once, and surveyed him closely, that I might commit no mistake.

"He seemed to look at me as I first passed, but spoke not, nor gave any sign of recognising me. I presently returned, and took my seat close beside him. Still he chose not to recognise or to speak to me. Remembering the manner of our parting, I naturally imagined that he had adopted this mode of showing his resentment. I was at a loss in what manner to begin the conversation with him. At last, I made some trite remark upon the weather. He seconded my observation

in the accent and air of one who is addressing an absolute stranger.

"I was affected by this coldness, and still imputing it to his resentment, and conscious that his indignation was not wholly without foundation, I turned to him, and, pressing his hand in mine, said, in a conciliating tone, 'Come, my dear Felix, let me persuade you to forget the harshness and austerity of my behaviour when we last met. I was wrong, and have ever since been anxious to repair the wrong by asking your pardon, and promising a different behaviour for the future.'

"He looked at me with an air of astonishment, but cheerfulness, and said, "Really, I harbour no resentment against you; nor, indeed, if I know myself, against any human being. I accept your apology, therefore, though I know not, or have forgotten your offence."

"The features of my companion, and the tones of his voice had a significance

which I never observed in them before. They used to denote too much of that restless, changeful, and impetuous temper which reigned within; but now, I never saw a more benign complacency. His voice used likewise to be variable, and his utterance sometimes hurried and sometimes tardy, and at no time perfectly and distinctly clear; but now, none of these defects were perceived. I looked at him with great attention, and my former suspicion that all was not well with him, very forcibly recurred. I was at a loss in what manner to renew our discourse, and was silent.

"Pray," said he, "permit me to ask where and how you and I, Sir, were last together. I have really forgotten the event, and cannot outroot the persuasion that this is the first time I ever saw you. Your name, I beseech you, Sir; that, perhaps, may revive my recollections. My own name is Felix Calvert."

"You may easily imagine how low my

heart sunk at this address. I looked at him again to dispel the momentary doubt that my eyes had been deceived as to his person, but such deception was impossible. I was still silent; for what could I say? He continued;

"It is strange. This is not the first time, since my arrival in this city, that persons whom I never before saw, have accosted me by my name, and claimed me for an old acquaintance. I have been inexpressibly amazed and confounded, and was determined that I would not part with the next person who should happen to greet me in this style, till the meaning of this conduct was fully explained. You, sir, have chanced to be the next; and, as you seem to be more interested in my fate than others have been, I will not part with you till you have perfectly dispelled this mist. Whom do you take me to be, and what was the interview to which you have just alluded?"

"All this tended still more strongly to

confirm my apprehensions. I could not conceal my distress. He noticed it.

"What a maze is here! You are greatly disturbed, sir. Am I, or is my deportment the cause of it? If we ever met before, it must have been beyond the ocean. So short a time has passed since my arrival, that I could not so soon have forgotten one with whom I have had any transactions in America. Did we ever meet in Europe?"

"Judge of the effect which words like these were adapted to produce upon my feelings. At last, my reflections suggested the propriety of humouring this strange perversion; and I said, in a calmer tone, 'Perhaps there is some mistake in one or both of us. I will willingly lay before you my reasons for supposing you one with whom I have been long acquainted, if you will favour me with your company to my house.' 'With all my heart,' said he.

"In our way home, neither of us spoke.

I was busied in ruminating on an accident so very mournful; for I need not tell you that these appearances were, in my eyes, sufficient indications of intellects unsound. At length we entered the house and my study, and seated ourselves at opposite sides of a table, with lights between us. I once more fixed my eyes upon his countenance, which was very strongly illuminated. Its expression, so very different from what it used to be, struck me in a very forcible manner. Had I not prepared the means of accounting for this change, I should not have hesitated to pronounce myself mistaken as to his person.

"'And now,' said he, 'gratify my impatient curiosity. Where was it that you and I were formerly acquainted?'

"I paused: what answer could I make?

"'Perhaps,' said he, 'you have mistaken one person for another. Look at me attentively. It cannot be that the faces of different persons are perfectly.

alike. Some differences must exist to one familiarly acquainted with either. Look at me, sir. Such an error is not impossible, nor unexampled.'

"This intimation now took hold of my belief for the first time. I was willing to suppose myself mistaken. To account for the past conduct of Felix, and for the scene that had just passed, by supposing him insane, was painful and abhorrent to my feelings.

"I complied, therefore, with his request. I perused his features with an eager scrutiny. Strange that I had not noted diversities before; but I had only seen him at a distance or by the dubious light of the moon. The well-known scar upon the left cheek of our friend, his hazel eyes, his dark hair, were utterly wanting in the image now before me.

"Twice and thrice, clearly and more clearly still, did I examine these features. My whole soul was in a tumult of amazement. These were the lineaments and

proportions of Felix, but the eyes were blue, the cheek was smooth, and the hair of the lightest chesnut tint. Were these changes wrought by some potent spell? And was the man before me absolutely different from your cousin? Yet, his name was Felix Calvert.

"He observed my unceasing perplexity. 'What,' said he, 'have you discovered? Do you not perceive the cause of your mistake? for some mistake it has assuredly been.'

"'But your name,' said I——

"'Is Felix Calvert.'

"Again was I overwhelmed with doubts. How could the names thus exactly agree? 'But your age?' said I——

"'My birth-day was the tenth of August, and I want two months of being nineteen years of age.'

"I need not tell thee, Lucy, that this was the birth-day, and this the age of our Felix. 'Who are your parents?'

"I know them not. I never knew them. I lost them in my infancy. Yet they contrived to secure to me their name, and a knowledge of my age, by engraving them upon a piece of copper.——

Thus far I perused, uninterruptedly, Sidney's letter. Here it dropped from my hand. My brain was for a moment clouded by that confusion which Sidney had naturally imagined to account for the contradictions he had witnessed. Thoughts, of such magnitude and number, rushed at once on my mind that they impeded and overturned each other. I held my hand to my forehead. I walked about the room with unequal steps. Surprise, joy, remorse, took possession of me. Rapid recollections succeeded, of my father's history, of his flight from his native country, of my twin-brother, whom my mother was compelled to leave behind her in the care of the faithful Alice, and of whom Alice was robbed by my vindictive grandfather, of the name of Felix,

which, in a moment of foreboding, she inscribed upon a piece of worthless copper and fastened round the child's neck, and of my change of name, my mother substituting for Stephen, which I first received, that of Felix, which had been conferred upon my brother, supposed by her to be irretrievably lost.

This is that stolen child; that long-lost brother, whom some freak of nature has impressed with a powerful resemblance of me, and whom some propitious star has thus led to the bosom of his family. Now is the shriek which Clelia uttered in espying her preserver from her window explained; now is that being, for the sake of whom she fled from England, whom she imagined herself to have recognised in me, whose portrait, she had, perhaps, clandestinely drawn; now is her mysterious distress, on discovering my real character and history, disrobed of all that created my wonder and anger!

This, then, is he whom Murphy and his sister talked of; *that* Felix Calvert whom they naturally supposed to have re-appeared upon this stage, to have renewed his intercourse with Clelia; and this is he whom Sidney discovered at the draught-board, and whose similarity to *their* Felix, misled him and my cousin into such pernicious errors with regard to me.

But where is this inestimable brother who partakes existence with me in this intimate and wonderful degree? Has he been claimed by my cousin and my mother? Has he gained access to Clelia, and put an end to those doubts and that distress which were visible at our last interview?

I was still rapidly musing upon these ideas when Sidney entered the room. His eye sparkled with some new and pleasurable meaning. The papers he had given me lay upon the table; and

my countenance clearly bespoke the discovery which I had already made by their means.

"I need not ask you," said he, "whether you have read these papers. I *see* that you have. Have you any inquiries to make which these letters have not solved?"

"Ten thousand," said I, impetuously. "Where is this brother? Has he seen our common parent? Does he know of my existence? Has he told you of his adventures?"

"Stop," said Sidney, "not so fast. These questions will more properly be put to him than me. He is at this moment in the outer room, and waits only my signal to enter. Stay a breath, and I will bring him to you."—Sidney went out.

The state of my mind, during this interval, would not be easily pourtrayed. Every fibre in my frame was tremulous. My heart throbbed as if I were on the

eve of some fatal revolution. The suddenness of this occurrence, the meeting with a brother so long severed from my side, and whose mode of birth made him, in some sort, an essential part of myself, seemed like passage into a new state of being. My suspenses were quickly at an end; for Sidney returned in a moment, leading in the stranger.

POSTSCRIPT OF THE AUTHOR.

Calvert's story is a five-act drama. Here ends the *first* act; and this being in itself complete, the links connecting it with ensuing acts being only afterwards unfolded, it is thought best to stop here. The reader's fancy has now a clue to all that has heretofore bewildered him, and will easily imagine to itself the consequences of such a meeting as is now about to take place.

JESSICA.

JESSICA.

CANNOT you come to me Jessy? I want you much. I long for you. Nay, I cannot do without you; so at all events, you must come.—That is no objection, my dear (for methinks I hear you plead, good girl as you are, your mother's infirmities). I tell you that is no objection; she can spare you for a week or two surely: at least a day or two. She will not miss you for so short a time. Besides, Jessy, do not be partial. Recollect you have a friend as well as a mother, and some attention is due to the first as well as the last; and I want you more than your mother can want you. You will be of more service to me than to her; quite as much, at any rate. I have a better, or an equal claim, to have

you with me altogether, but you see I urge not my claim, and I hope you will give me some credit for moderation. I do not ask you to come and stay with me constantly, but a week or two, at this delightful season, I must have.

And this I ask for your sake, as well as my own: Nay, for your mother's sake I ask it; for has she no interest in your gratification? Has she not a direct, and even a selfish interest in your health; and does not your health as well as your pleasure call for some respite from household and chamber duties? These sweet airs, and this lively green, a twilight walk with me under these tall elms; a cessation of all your cares and trials for a week or fortnight, or month,—your health would be improved; your spirits recruited: and you would return to her bed-side ten times more able than you now are to nurse and amuse her.

It must be so, Jessy; and now, that

point being settled, when will you come? Name the hour, and Tom shall call for you.

Would it were so, sweet Jessy, but for all I am so peremptory and positive, I fear that I shall not prevail on you to give me a single hour of your company here. Have I not before now besought you to come; have I not called on you, on purpose, and with the carriage at the door, with footman by, and steps down, ready to receive you, argued and entreated in vain? In truth, Jessy, thou art an obstinate girl. More than once has your strange attachment to home made me half angry with you; and *more* than half displeased, if you now refuse, shall I be. I shall quarrel with you outright—I believe.

To no purpose, I fear, shall I reason with you; yet upon my life, Jessy, I think I have the better cause. Your friend stands quite as much in need of your fostering kindness and your wisdom

as your mother. Nay, I firmly believe, that if there were scales to weigh your usefulness respectively to her and to me, my scale would prove the heavier. Can I not convince you of it? *Conviction* is all you want, and if I *could* but convince you I should have you here in a trice. Shall I try? I *will*: but no, I will *not*. Have I not already tried; ineffectually tried?

You do not *love* me, Jessy. That is the secret cause of your reluctance. You are not just to me: you are not—*grateful*. Forgive me sweet girl. I have not forgotten how this imputation once affected you. What excuse then can I make for repeating it now? Why do I ask your pardon? Yet I know that placable spirit will grant my petition for guilt a thousand times worse.

If you will come, all shall be well. I will get the summer-house in order, on purpose. You shall dine, sup, and sleep with me alone. I will have you all to

myself. So come;—begs, prays, and intreats your

SOPHIA.

I am almost afraid to write to you, in my present humour. I would not, methinks, have you know how passionate I can be: yet let sincerity, at least, be my virtue. Let me not pass on you for better than I am.

You have taught me, indeed, not to be afraid of you. So prompt as you always are to forgive, to palliate, or overlook my faults. My own heart reproaches me, but your lips distil nothing but sweetness. No fount of bitterness is that heart. And hence I suppose my unreserve to you. I cannot bear reproaches from another. The less can I bear them if I deserve them. Contempt, surely, I deserve, but, nevertheless, I would not be contemned. I cannot bear contempt, Jessy: and so my actions I

hide; my feelings I disguise, to all the world—but you; for you echo not back my self-censure. My frankest avowals call not forth your scorn: nothing but soothing praise do you ever whisper in my ear.

Yet how is it? You do not seem to see my conduct as I see it: you reason and feel in a different manner in relation to my own errors. Yet this difference brings not your sagacity into question with me. It creates no doubt as to your discernment. Nay, so far from weakening, it carries higher my reverence. I would fain know how all this happens, Jessy.

Your own conduct too! so unlike my follies and caprices! conveys so strong, though indirect, a censure of mine! opens my eyes still wider on my own defects! makes me still more despise myself! more uneasy in my own reflections.

At times I am angry with you! I deal

in ungenerous reproaches! but your gentle heart is never responsive to such discords. My fits of impatience, so absurd, so inexcusable in my own eyes, trouble you not. How they lower me in my own estimation! Yet, strange to tell, by some inconceivable adroitness, you extract from them new motives for tenderness and gratitude, and yet lower not yourself; but raise yourself higher in the scale of excellence, and in my veneration.

Truly, truly, thou art an admirable creature, Jessy, and I love thee, that I do. A friend! Till this age, and till I knew thee, I never had a friend, and never shall have another, of either sex; for surely the world contains not such another creature as thou: at least, in the form of *man*. Single then, Jessy, shall I ever be; for he whom I marry must be more than lover: he must be my friend.

Less perfect thou, less placable; less irreproachable; I should not bear thee

near me. I should disdainfully and angrily cast thee away. But now that thy words sooth, while thy conduct only upbraids me: that humiliation, though increased by reviewing thy deportment, is properly my own act. I can love thee with a pure, may I not say with a generous affection.

But now, what has become of the peevish and reproachful humour in which I began this letter? Have I talked it, have I reasoned it away? It is certainly —much abated. Not quite disappeared however. I am yet a little displeased with you. Shall I give way to, or struggle against the impulse—to scold you for—unfriendliness—for ingratitude?

After such representations, I really think, Jessy, you might have come, for a day or two at least, if merely to evince a disposition to oblige me. The same disposition on my part, has not been wanting. All I wanted was ability. And then from your perverseness not the

slightest boon from me will you allow to contaminate your hand.

This refusal is obstinate, is *proud* in you, Jessy—but my passion is again at work. I must lay down my pen. I shall only expose myself to your compassion.

How little am I fit for a world like this. So full of disappointment and vicissitude. Two or three hours, when all nature was smiling upon me, have I been the prey of vexation. Resentful, sullen and unhappy!

I saw the carriage coming up the avenue empty. I allowed my desires, and not my reason to dictate my expectations. So I set my whole heart upon your coming back with Tom.

Tom brought me the letter. I snatched it from him, and resolved to disburthen my heart somewhere—"What kept

you so long, saunterer? Creeping, creeping; were you trying legs with a snail!"

"Why Madam! a snail! Madam," said the simpleton, confused and at a loss what to say.

My conscience rebuked me. "Well, well (in a softer accent) go thy ways, and make more haste in future."

I read thy letter cursorily. It hushed not my tumultuous feelings. I went to the harpsichord—Let me try, said I, what music will do. But attention was refractory and vagrant, and I dashed both hands upon a half score keys at once—"Stubborn things! never in tune three minutes together."

I went to my closet. Thomson's Seasons was the volume. Let me try the poet by the only sure test. "Let me look at nature and at him by turns. But it would not answer. No salutary occupation had charms for me, who had planned out walks of conversation with you, for the remainder of the day.

"I'll walk by myself, and read her letter again 'on the bench under the bank'."

It was a hard struggle, and demanded several readings of thy letter, to lull myself into any degree of complacency. Thus Jessy, do I lay open before thee, the frail, very frail heart of thy friend. Think well of it, think better of it than I do, or I shall not know how to bear my own reflections.

How is it, with such difference between us, that we are friends? In what respect am I like you? In every point we are contrary. In fortune, in external condition, how opposite!

You, just above naked, hungering, unsheltered poverty; but not above the necessity of toiling with your hands for bread. Not exempt from menial or servile offices. — I rolling in affluence, not raising a hand for any other end than my amusement, leaving to others the most trifling personal offices.—You, p*ss-

ing your life, under a low roof, in a dirty and obscure suburb, supplying the ceaseless wants of an old, infirm, and blind mother, who requires hourly attendance, and will not allow you to consult your recreation or health, by a day's absence from her chamber once a year.—I moving about, in a circuit of a thousand miles, at my own pleasure, as the whim of the moment instigates, always in the enjoyment of lightsome halls, and lofty ceilings, and wide prospects. — You, lonely, unobserved, unvisited, untalked about, an object to the hurry of forgetfulness, to the frown of scorn. I, with the casual advantages of fortune, and birth, wooed, flattered, and caressed by hundreds, placed uppermost at banquets, balls, and visits.

Thus far the undiscerning and vulgar will suppose that I have the advantage; but let the effects of our different situations in our respective characters be marked, and the advantage will no longer be given to me.

With all the means of happiness; I have it not: but whose thoughts are more cheerful, whose days are more serene than those of Jessica? She is a meek, quiet, and humble creature; while I am arrogant, restless, captious, always looking forward with despondency, backward with regret. Jessy, in her humble sphere, is constantly promoting the comforts and enjoyments of two beings, and derives happiness herself from the success of her efforts; while I, *with all appliances and means to boot*, live neither to my own content, nor to the ordinary satisfaction of another.

Shall I carry farther the comparison? In form, in features, in stature, we have nothing in common, our education has been different. All those showy arts and graces which a master can teach are mine. You have none of them. My father has endeavoured to make me a writer and reader. For this end he has furnished me with rules, and set before me

models, and I believe they have profited me something; but how little, with my languid resolution, and fickle temper, have they contributed to my happiness.

Jessy, on the contrary, is mistress of no elegance; music, elocution, painting, embroidery are none of hers. She knows nothing but the basting and hemming needle, and leaves to others the imitation of flowers and faces, while she accommodates her own and her neighbour's wants, with worsted stockings and russet petticoats.

Having passed her youth among people nowise bookish, she has little or nothing of that sort of knowledge that books give us. Reading is a task to her full of tediousness and difficulty.

While Sophia is prating in a gay circle, charming an audience by a lesson of Scarlette, reading some descriptive poem, lolling on a sopha, or musing in an orange grove, Jessy is plying the laborious needle in her sorry chamber; kindling sticks beneath a tea kettle, sweeping

cobwebs from a cellar ceiling, or dressing her helpless mother. What a difference! Yet, that the interval between us should thus, in some sense, have disappeared; that I should have found thee out in thy unpromising obscurity, and have fallen in love with thy unostentatious merit; and that Jessy should lay those scruples aside that interfere so much to keep at distance persons in our situation, and give me her love in return, —are all very strange things.

Ah! Jessy, since the little crosses to my humour that I meet with have such effects upon my temper, how should I have behaved, if fortune had placed me in thy situation? I sometimes feign to myself the consequences of such a change, of descending from this ease, this luxury, this homage, this idleness, to such a fixed, absurd, monotonous and servile condition as thine is. In not one particular can I conceive that my conduct, in such a change, would resemble

thine. Quickly would my keen regret, my mortified disdain, my humiliating drudgery kill me, and the contrast between thee and me, at present so complete, would be no less so in the change that I have supposed.

I expected when I sat down to write, to work myself gradually into a better humour, and it has happened so. I forgive thee, Jessy, for the pain thy refusal of my invitation has given me, but only on one condition; that you make me some amends by writing often. There is no duty, I presume, to prevent that. That you will not come, proves indeed, that you love your mother better than me; but if you do not write, and write frequently, it will prove that you have not the least affection for your

SOPHIA.

'Tis true, my friend, Courtland offered me his vows, but at a time when my

heart was still rent with anguish, when my tears still flowed for the death of my sister.

At another time,—and now, perhaps, it is possible, for he is an excellent man. I could almost love him for his treatment of his mother; and is he not my brother's friend? Besides, his conduct has been uniformly generous. He knew well what a strenuous, what an irresistible advocate he might have had in my brother, but he forbore, at my petition indeed, to intimate his wishes; and this forbearance, in some sense, served his cause with me.

I think, Sophia, that I want not generosity, I want not power to discern and to value true merit. Courtland is one whom I always revered; and whom, now that I am somewhat relieved from afflicting recollections, I might love perhaps, if his former views should return.

From you, Sophia, I will hide no emotion of my heart; I rely upon your

honour and your delicacy. It is impossible that you should make an unwarrantable use of this confession. And yet, I should never have made it, even to you, if I did not know that Courtland's views with regard to me can never revive. His affections have since been disposed of to one here far more worthy than the humble Jessy.

Nay, methinks, I could almost wish him to know my present thoughts. Surely they are innocent thoughts. Not to have them, how obdurate, how blameably insensible would that prove me to be? And if I have, and ought to have them, why not own them frankly? To my brother, to him, to every body.

Heaven is my witness, that my rejection of his offers flowed not from pride, from stupidity, but only from regard to him and you. I am wrong, in the assertion, I believe. It *was* from pride, the pride I took in vieing with him in generosity. For who was I, to be beloved

by so noble and enlightened a spirit as Courtland, poor portionless girl as I was; ignorant, illiterate, without any of the gay embellishments and witching graces that conscious merit and an opulent condition bestowed, and which Courtland used to meet with in his places of gay resort, his brilliant circles?

Was I to look down upon this man, so much older, and consequently so much wiser than I? Such graceful humanity, so sweet an aspect as he had? No, I was not worthy of him. I told him so, and wept when I told him so. My grief was no common grief, but sprung only from belief of my unworthiness.

But do not mistake me, Sophia, I did not love Courtland then, nor do I love him now. It was because I did not love him that I grieved. Love would have made up all deficiencies, but if I had married, I should have carried to his arms indeed, gratitude, reverence, every thing but love; and what but love could have

made me worthy of Courtland? What else could drive from my remembrance the image of my sister? At least, what else could hinder this from engrossing too much of my thoughts. What else could give me the ability together with the zeal for knowledge, which in time might bring me nearer to the level, and more entitle me to the respect of such a man?

Methinks, Sophia, this passion would work surprising changes in such creatures as thee and me. Yet let me apply the remark only to myself. As to my Sophia, she is already every thing that love could make her. Where, my sweet friend, gettest thou thy looks, and thy tones? It is inconceivable how any one can be in your company, and not love. But men in general I suspect, are a grovelling, sordid, and perverse *mob*; else they could not, so many of them, have seen my Sophia with indifference; for you tell me that no one ever loved

you, but that by the way, I do not quite believe.

But ah! I have found out the cause. You do not talk and look to every one as you do to me, especially to men. You turn aside those blue eyes, or glance at them austerely, as who should say, "thou art my enemy." Yes, yes, that must be the cause, to be sure. What a simpleton was I to miss it so long.

And yet, Sophia, I dare say, if the truth were known, every heart has not been callous. For all your guarded looks and circumspect attitudes, many a one, I doubt not, sighs in secret for my friend. And she knows it too, I warrant, but she is so scrupulous a judge. With her all is not love that sighs, nor will she own it to exist in any heart, which she deigns not to admit to fellowship with her own. And truly thou art right my friend. He cannot love you as he ought, who is not your peer in

merit, and where are we to hunt for one gifted so divinely as my Sophia?

Will you pardon me? I was going to mention *one.* Rumour was very busy with your names, and the tale wanted not plausibility. I scrupled not to believe all that was said, nor to wish much more. Your delicacy has, I suppose, made you silent to me, and I ought not to be talkative; yet the spell is on me and I *must* talk. For what do I take up my pen, but to tell you all my thoughts? and have not I, but now, set you the example of this very sort of ingenuousness?

They say, Sophia, that Courtland was in love with you; yet not till after his failure with me; and how surprising is that, since he grew up under the same roof with you, and must have seen you without disguise and so intimately. But why say I that his love for me went before?

His conduct spoke differently. He was, no doubt, so long withheld by disinterested regards, but they at last yielded, as they ought to do, to consciousness of merit. So he wrote to your father, it seems, stating his hopes; yet like one who scarcely hoped, and was prepared to return fidelity and gratitude, even if refused. It was an admirable letter.

'Indeed! why, you have not seen it, have you?'

I have, or something that pretended to be it. Courtland showed a copy to my brother before it was sent, and your father showed what he received to some friends, and so rumour got speedy hold of it. I need not say more, for without doubt you know the whole affair, and now that you see I know something of it, will you oblige me by telling me all? And here I will break off, to give you opportunity. Adieu.

Were it not for this pathetic earnestness I should think you in jest. Can it be that the story is absolutely new to you?

I fear then I was wrong in mentioning it to you at all. Alas! how easily, how undesignedly, may one do wrong.

But you call on me for particulars. I had better suppress them, I think, but that I suppose is to be cautious too late. So I will even tell you, as well as I can recollect them, the contents of this letter. Indeed I recollect them perfectly, and will give them to you, word for word. These are they:

"I am greatly at a loss in what manner to address you, even now, that repeated trials have convinced me, that my subject can only be discussed in a letter.

"Never I trust shall I forget the obligations which I owe to your generosity. All that I am, my education, my character, my fortune, I owe entirely to

you. These benefits, perhaps, a different mind would labour to forget, and it would be still more natural to avoid adding to their number; but as to me, I think I may venture to affirm that I never shall forget them.

"In what terms shall I offer a proposal, by your assent to which, all former obligations, great as they are, will be unspeakably surpassed, though by your rejecting it, they will be nowise diminished!

"When I reflect upon the beauty, accomplishments and features of your daughter, and upon my own defects, I am prompted to bury my aspiring thoughts in oblivion, since should your consent to my seeking her favour be obtained, what slender hopes can I have of success in my application to her, and would it not be unwise and rash to risk exciting your indignation, for a purpose which should I be so happy as to gain your consent, may still have insuperable obstacles to encounter, in the pre-occu-

pied affections, or invincible indifference of the lady herself?

"I should not be a man, however — I should not deserve that rank in your good opinion which I have hitherto possessed, if I did not somewhat trust to my own integrity, if I did not ascribe to myself that merit which lies chiefly in discerning and revering another's excellence, and that gratitude which is ready to devote all my life, in return for the preference of a virtuous woman.

"I intreat you to believe that this request is not founded on any, the slightest proof that your daughter regards me in any other light than as her father's friend. Need I say that I have scrupulously avoided making myself an interest in her heart? Since to do this, before I had gained her father's promises, would be equally inconsistent with my sense of justice, with my gratitude to you, and with my regard for the happiness of the young lady herself.

"I cannot say more, but that, however you decide upon this occasion, or any other in which heaven may give you power over my happiness, I will not question the rectitude of that decision, nor will it be possible for me to be any other than your grateful and affectionate

******"

What have I done, my Sophia. I am almost frighted at myself. Fearful, very fearful am I, that I have done wrong.

Having heard something of this kind whispered, I took my brother to task. I knew he was master of all Courtland's secrets. So my brother, after some hesitation on his side, and much importunity on mine, showed me this letter, and now have I shown it to you.

You may suppose how anxious I was to know the answer. I knew you then only by repute, but what a character for sense, beauty, and accomplishments, was yours. And deeply as I revered Court-

land, could I help fervently praying for his success? This was your father's reply.

"You will perceive, Courtland, that I need not comment upon your letter, after I have told you that my daughter considers herself, and that all my family considers her as actually betrothed to her cousin Watkins, who has been a few years in Europe, and whom we now expect shortly to return to solemnize his marriage. I will only add, that I wish he may possess, in all respects, a character similar to yours: I shall then as truly rejoice in my son-in-law, as I now do in my friend. L. F."

And now, let me repeat, what has your Jessy done? Surely had I thought you ignorant of this affair, I should never have mentioned it. There were, indeed, no motives for your father's disclosing it to you, but since he mentioned it to

others, it was natural to suppose that he had made it no secret with any body, or at least that the rumour, which must first have sprung up somewhere in your own family, had reached you.

I was always afraid, till now, of mentioning any thing of this to you. You set me an example of reserve which I thought it became me faithfully to follow. This engagement with your cousin, too, I dared not hint at it, without some encouragement from you to do so. And yet, communicative as you were to me, in all your most intimate concerns, and professing to hide nothing of the least moment that had ever befallen you, and thinking it impossible that affairs of this kind, so important and so recent too, should be forgotten, I knew not what to think.

What unhappy misapprehensions sometimes occur! You cannot imagine in how many ways I tried to account for,

and excuse what I could not but think a breach of sincerity in my Julia.

But are you not, indeed, my Sophia, as your father has asserted, actually betrothed to your cousin? He said you were; that you and all your family considered it as a positive engagement. I should be deeply grieved if this disclosure should involve you in any perplexity, yet what ill consequences can it produce?

Are you serious, Sophia? Can you, indeed, think so lightly of the filial duties? Your father you say has no right to dictate your marriage choice! A dubious and dangerous opinion, believe me, my friend: reconsider this subject, I beseech you, remember the sacred injunction to those who decide for another. Put yourself beforehand in that other's place. Before you determine on a parent's claims, recollect yourself a moment, and imagine that you are the parent.

And so, it seems, this conduct of Courtland, which I so much admire for its magnanimity, does him injury in your opinion. Being shortly independent in fortune, and a woman in age, you think it became him to treat you as a being under self-controul only.

How different, indeed, did he treat me, on a similar occasion. He knew that my brother would zealously concur with his wishes, as soon as they were made known; and would, perhaps, second them with his injunctions or remonstrances, but he disdained to owe success to any thing but his own merits, and generously spared me all that pain which could not fail to follow my repugnance to my brother's will, or my compliance with it.

With regard to you, he sought, and surely could expect nothing from your father but his permission to address you. Had he been your equal in birth, fortune, and the like; had he been bound to your family by no personal obligations,

he might, without impropriety, have treated you as he treated me; but this, as the case stood, would not have been right. *I* think so. In your situation, I should have looked for such treatment from a man of probity. Any attempt to prepossess me before my father's concurrence was, at least, requested, would have grieved me much.

If young persons like each other, in spite of parental dislikes, let them persist in their choice; but why not do this openly? why not set so much value on the will of parents as, at least, to know what it is; and try any arguments or intreaties to reconcile it with their own? A choice of this kind, disapproved by parents, may be best on the whole; but certainly its benefits are immeasurably increased by their approving it.

I do not know Courtland's opinions fully. I suspect he would not accept your love, were it offered him, without your father's sanction; and yet if he

were placed in such a situation, that the parent's inclination or child's happiness must be sacrificed, I am puzzled to think how he ought to decide.

Let me thank you, my beloved friend, with tears of true pleasure for this letter. How happy am I in your love and confidence. How zealous shall I be, and how proud to deserve it.

You cannot think, for I cannot describe my feelings, when you first made advances to me, and offered me your friendship. Your first visit, how unlooked for! And your manners so affectionate and affable! Your inquiries so tender and free to me that was so absolute a stranger to the world and to you. While you staid, I was in a constant flutter of surprise. This made me awkward in accepting and returning all your kindnesses. To be sure, thought I, when you

were gone, this is some freak of the charming girl; or she has some inquiry to make or some end to serve, which she found no opportunity of making on this visit; but she will not surely repeat it; especially if it were made for my own sake, for how coldly and ambiguously have I behaved?

But you came again very soon: the very next evening, gay, charming, and blithsome as ever. Do you love, Sophia, to give pleasure to the lonely and forlorn heart? You do; then how much have you been gratified by your intercourse with me. A generous, a disinterested delight has been yours! Your efforts have been amply rewarded by their own success.

What a change have I experienced since I gained your love! A warmth, grateful and delicious, a softness which I am not rich enough in words to call by its true name, has come back again to my heart. *Come back again*, I

say, for once I had it, or something very like it. So much so that I cannot tell where lies the difference. 'Twas not the emotion that I felt for Marianne or Sally. In this there is something more extatic: more of gratitude, I think, and admiration. Their love you know was due to me. It began at my birth, and grew as I grew; besides, though very good, they had no remarkable or dazzling excellence about them; such they were as we usually meet with, plain in person and untutored in mind.

No! what I feel for you I have not felt since I was sixteen, yet it cannot, you know, be love. Yet is there such a difference brought about by mere sex.—My Sophia's qualities are such as I would doat upon in man. Just the same would win my whole heart; where then is the difference? On my word, Sophia, I see none; but that's no proof that none exists. A million of truths there are, no

doubt, that thy unsagacious friend has never seen and never will see.

How cold was once my heart! How dreary was my loneliness! Yet I was not conscious of it. I was not discontented. The change which your friendship has made, is not by pains removed, but by pleasures added—pleasures how ineffable!

Ignorance, I believe, my Sophia, is the mother of some kinds of happiness, at least of quietude: how can we regret what we have never lost? and to lose it, we must have it; and by having it only can we know its value. I am now in all external respects, just as if I never had a sister, but how different would my feelings be, if in truth, they never had been born?

How my mother shrieked over a breathless son who died in childhood! But suppose the boy had never been born, then, as now, she would have had but

four children, and she would not have lamented that they were but four.

Pleasure and pain, my dear Sophia, strangely run into, and mingle with each other. Ignorance, I said, is the mother of content, but I would not for all that be ignorant. Contentment, methinks, is no desirable thing; pleasure, indeed, cannot be had, without the risk at least of accompanying or ensuing pain; but this mixture of bitter and sweet is better than the utterly insipid; better than the tasteless potion of indifference.

But why do I call the broken bonds of sympathy pain? Why, indeed, do I call them *broken?* Death severs us not from those we love. They still exist, not in our remembrance only, but with true existence; and if good, their being is a happy one. What more should we wish, and why should life, with all its cares and maladies, be prayed for, either for ourselves or our friends?

My friend removes to the next village,

or he crosses the sea, but I am not much unhappy even at our parting, and that sadness is soon succeeded by a sweet tranquillity. He is living, and he is prosperous, and forgets me not, and some time I shall see him again, and that consoles me in his absence; but how blind is my sagacity.

How know I that he lives—that he is virtuous and happy, that he gives me still a place in his remembrance? Is he not a mortal creature, and encompassed therefore by the causes of sickness and death, beset by temptations, and liable to new affections that exclude the old?

But intelligence is brought that he is dead: and why should I weep? Why grieve that he has gone, from perishable feverish life, to blest eternity, where maladies of mind and ills of body betide him no more?

But I have lost him. No, while he lived I had lost him, indeed, for the space between us was so wide that I saw him

never, and heard from him but rarely: but now has he not come home to me? and do not I hourly commune with him? Am I not sure of his existence and safety, for my friend was good; and is he not more present to my thoughts, and more the guardian of my virtue and partaker of my sympathy than ever?

But I shall never see him more. Indeed! and whose fault will that be? I must die like him; indeed it is uncertain when, but *then* we shall meet. And what then but my own unworthiness; my own misdeeds shall sever us? Nothing but guilt will divide us from each other dead, though virtue itself was unable to unite us living. And how invigorating to my fortitude, what barrier against temptation is that belief?

No, my Sophia, death is no calamity to virtue, to dead or to living worth. Our wailings for the dead, are breathed only by thoughtless or erring sensibility. Is it not so? I would not affirm too posi-

tively, or too much. I know so little! yet I can't but think that many of our woes are selfish woes.

Yet I mourned for my sisters: but rebuked myself while I mourned. Such reflections as these comforted me; but they would not come at first, nor would they stay long, till time had soothed me into some composure. Now and then at thoughtful moments, when taken, if I may say so, unawares, my tears gushed anew and my breast was agonized by sobs.

Still have I, as I long have had, something that may be called sorrow, but a sweet, a chastening, an heart-improving sorrow. Most dearly do I prize it. For the world I would not part with my sorrow. Glad am I that I once had sisters, and I have them still, but I would not have them any where on earth.

It seems to me, Sophia, that the only true grief is connected with guilt; every other has so many gleams and respites,

and is so transient, and carries in its train so many after joys! But remorse—the sense of shame deserved, the weight of human and divine indignation — *that* must be agony indeed.

But how have I been thus led on! When I sat down, I designed a very different letter, but one is carried forward insensibly, when the heart knows no restraint, and to thee, Sophia, mine knows none. 'Tis now too late to say all that I meant to say, but another packet will serve as well. Adieu.

JESSICA.

And will I continue to love you? Will I live with you at Wortleyfield? Indeed I will, my Sophia. I will share with you in your retirement.

But, alas!—And why this pang? My mother, Sophia!—while she lives, I must be her fosterer, and her death only can

make it possible to join thee in thy sweet retreat.

It must come sometime to be sure; she is old, and it must come soon. I cannot deny this, but I am able sometimes to forget it, and I *love* to forget it.

I did not tell thee, my friend, that *I* was the sage that I had painted. I look forward to the death of one so dear, and the tear will start. My heart will ache when I sometimes look back. Yet I want not fortitude, I hope. While my reason fully exerts itself I shall never, I believe, despond. Neither in the foresight or the sufferance of such evils—evils which no virtue in me can elude; that owe their truth to no degeneracy in myself or my friends, — shall I want the needful consolation. I thank my God, who has as yet, never suffered me to want it.

I will live with thee, Sophia, but thou knowest the conditions; put thyself in my place and let me hear thee say—

Many, many years may our scheme remain unaccomplished.

But what a scheme is this. You cannot, surely, be in earnest. No, no, Sophia, thy stars will never permit that. And yet the very causes that attract a multitude of wooers, will, in my friend's case, obstruct their success; thousands will solicit her hand, but who can deserve the boon?

How much to be regretted that your equal should never be found! You do not think so: you prefer, or *say* you do the single life; but that, my Sophia, shall I say, is one of your errors. Yet before I say that, I should know perhaps, the grounds of your aversion.

You despair of finding one that will please you. While that despair lasts, I see not how you can think otherwise than with preference of singlehood: and indeed I too, am almost desperate on your account, yet if such a one should

offer and be accepted, fervently should I rejoice in my Sophia's destiny, for wedlock is a blisful state. Excellent and happy as thou art, my Sophia, far more so wilt thou be in the character of wife and mother.

This Watkins then is nothing to you. Methinks, I pity him for sufferings to come. Returning with such hopes, can he see my Sophia and not love her? But is not my friend a little forward? To predetermine the rejection of one, merely because your common friends have decreed your union, without regard to any thing but family aggrandizement: not a good motive, perhaps, if it were the single motive, but it cannot be the single one with your friends. Kindred, fortune, equality of birth, contiguity of estates, ought surely to weigh something even in your scale, but especially in that of your friends. Worth, talents, generous temper, equable deportment, love, may like-

wise be required by both, and these though not the only weights, may and ought to be, by far the most ponderous.

Personal qualities, however, may be every thing with you. The other may not claim the least regard from you; but if these extensive recommendations will not promote your cousin's suit, they surely ought not to be obstructions to it.

But you, it seems, are contented. "My brother say you, Hannah? Very well. I will be there in a moment." I will hear what my brother has to say, Sophia; it is not often that he visits us at this hour; something of moment must bring him, and then will I be back again to my pen.

Since our correspondence began, I have been an indefatigable penwoman. Something may grow out of this in time. And yet, as I said formerly, it is not the

mere writing or prating, the merely putting words together with the lips or pen, that tends to improve; quite the contrary, I fear, with me and my careless manner, in which at every step, method must be broken and perspicuity be outraged.

Yet I write every day, I think, with more ease. I mean not as to words or thoughts, for those that come I take; and you know every child, just mistress of her tongue, has a ceaseless volubility, but merely as to management of pen and fingers. This grows continually easier with me. But I was going to tell you what occasioned my brother's unseasonable visit.

"What say you, Jessy," said he, somewhat abruptly, "to an addition to your family—to a boarder?"

"A boarder, brother! Let me rather ask in my turn what you say to it?"

"Nay, 'tis for you to decide. If you can reconcile yourself to such a charge,

such an enlargement of your family, it may not, perhaps, be ineligible as to the person."

"But who is the person, and what will he expect from us? all, you know, must depend upon that."

"I scarcely know how to describe him; he is one of middle size, has modesty, reserve, is a stranger, lately arrived from Europe, knows no one here; yet he has the air of one not meanly born, nor penuriously educated. He wishes for a snug, quiet, humble abode, in a small, frugal and decent family. The thought occurred that a single person, who chose to live in this manner, might be no unsuitable guest to you; he is willing to pay well, much more than the additional expense of his entertainment, and that will be worth considering by you and mamma. What say you to the scheme? Yes or no, as you please. If we decline, the accommodation he wants will be easily found elsewhere."

"Why, brother, I cannot answer you immediately. Mamma may not be willing, so long used as she has been to one track, and one round of objects, and indeed, the same is the case with me. The presence of a man, and a stranger, under this roof, is so great an innovation that —but if the man be modest and compliant, can put up with an humble fare and worse cookery, and especially if you approve his character and recommend him, I see not what objection can be made. But surely he cannot be content with our frugality; we shall be obliged to enlarge our scheme of living."

"No, no, I should not have thought of it had any thing of that sort been needful, you have had but too much trouble on your hands already. I would be much more willing to lessen than increase it, but the customs of Colden (that is his name) are very remarkable, as to lodging and diet; and are so singularly plain and simple, that you will scarcely be

conscious of any addition to your household.

"You have only to set before him, morning, noon, and night, at your own eating hours, a pint of milk, in an earthen or tin porringer, with a cut or two of just such brown bread as you make already for your own use, in the little back room above, so tight, airy, and clean; let a blanket be laid upon the sacking bottom and his bed is made. To all other particulars he will pay the due attention himself."

"But who is this man? Where did you light upon him?"

"I sometimes call, you know, at Phillipson's; I was there a few days ago. They propose, it seems, to leave the city, and mentioned to me their anxiety to procure suitable accommodations for one who had lived with them for the last three months, and to whom their removal from town hindered them from any

longer giving entertainment. 'Who was he?' I asked.

"They could only tell his name, and relate his habits. They were such as I have just mentioned; they were simple, and always the same. He talked but little, spending his time abroad chiefly, or in his chamber. 'What were his engagements abroad?' No business, they believed; he went out at different hours, merely it seemed, for recreation, as they and their neighbours had sometimes met him strolling in the fields. He was always sedate, and sometimes had an aspect bordering upon melancholy, spoke affably and gently when he spoke at all, but seemed to entertain a preference for solitude and silence. 'What company did he keep?' None at all, they believed. No one visited him; they had never seen him in the company of others; his demeanour had always been so mild that they loved him much,

and though his accommodation cost them little or nothing, he had offered of his own accord, and had punctually paid the highest price. For their own sake, as well as for the sake of profit, they were loth to lose him, but it could not be avoided, and they were only anxious that he might be accommodated as much to his mind, somewhere else.

"These particulars laid some hold on my curiosity; and reflecting on the situation of your family, I thought that his residence with you, might chance to prove highly and equally agreeable to all parties. Being then in his room, I requested them to call him down to me; he came at the summons.

"His appearance was very prepossessing. At first view I should have judged him to be under twenty-five; but there quickly appeared a stedfastness and forethought in his looks, inconsistent with so immature an age. His manners were

polished and graceful, in no ordinary degree.

"Phillipson mentioned to him my ability to point out to him a suitable lodging. I described to him your household and dwelling, and told him that I doubted not my sister's willingness to entertain him on the same terms as the Phillipson's had done.

"His countenance assumed a less thoughtful air, and he seemed to receive my offer with pleasure. He explained his own modes and expectations, and requiring a few more particulars respecting you and your economy, cheerfully assented to the scheme. I promised to speak to you about it immediately, but had no opportunity before now. I have seen him to-day, and he says, if agreeable to you, he will take possession on Monday night. You know, our mother, in such a case will leave the decision to you, and so what say you?"

"What can I say! Your judgment must decide for me, brother. If you think it proper."

"I see no objection to it, I confess."

"You say he is a stranger in the city."

"So it seems, but he has made himself so, by his privacy. Phillipson's family know him as well as long, domestic, and curious observation of gossips, old and young, breeched and petticoated, can make them. They praise his gentleness, sobriety, and circumspection. His countenance speaks very strongly in his favour with me; so do his manners and words; they exact respect from me. Never saw I dignity so visible."

"Well then let him come, I will be prepared for him on Monday."

And now, Sophia, let me ask myself why I rehearsed this family dialogue to you? As if whatever chanced to occupy my thoughts, deserved a place in your's. You will not perhaps comprehend how so

small an incident should acquire importance, but you know the humble, solitary, and obscure life which I have always till now led. Shut up in this cottage singly with my mother, and having no intercourse with the rest of the world, except with my brother, and with your charming self—to become all of a sudden, inmate with a stranger; a man too, of no mean deportment; his real character and past adventures unknown; no wonder that I feel a little disquiet; some fluttering expectations; as if entering on a new scene.

I know I shall be extremely desirous of obliging our guest, but doubt I shall be awkward, and be either too reserved from dread of offending, or too officious from the desire to please. How are little things magnified by inexperience, and how does my ignorance degrade me from the womanly sedateness and address of eighteen, to the childish blunders, and timidities of twelve!

But again, what is all this to you? I will say no more upon this trifling subject, and cannot return, just now, to that which I left upon my brother's entrance. So adieu.

What a sweet encourager art thou, Sophia! Can you truly say that my prating pen constitutes your chief pleasure? Can you sincerely request me to continue the little tale of all that for whatever reason, finds an interest in my bosom?

And yet, now I think of it, this is acting but like yourself; and as I should applaud myself for acting were I in your circumstances. To be thus surprised at proofs of condescension and sympathy in my friend, is it not confessing indirectly that I did not expect to find you as good as you ought to be? Fie upon me for an envious, or at least, a negligent observer!

Methinks, those who are themselves good, would find so many inducements, and advantages in goodness, that specimens of virtue in others would never make them stare, and exclaim as I do. They would only feel surprise when instances of folly or vice occurred. Yet it is not so with me, though without that experience which teaches us, perhaps, not to judge of others by our own hearts! Can it be that I judge thus hastily of others, by my own feelings? I believe it is.

I say to myself, Sophia is generous, kind, affectionate. Strange, that she is so, since I in her situation should be otherwise. I should be arrogant, disdainful, selfish; and thus, unthinkingly, do we afford a criterion of our own character, in the judgment that we form of others. A just punishment upon us, I think.

And yet if the matter be more deeply considered, that inference may not

hold. Are we not taught self-diffidence —self-blame? And is not charity to others chiefly built upon our belief of the strength of those temptations that have made them wicked, and which, had we been exposed to them, would have had the like effects upon us? Why else are we so earnestly warned to watchfulness; to rely upon our divine helper, and to lay not more stress on deliverance from evil, than on freedom from temptation?

But why to thee, my friend, do I thus run into the moralizing strain? Poor and crude must be my thoughts, on subjects like this, and not worthy of my Sophia's notice—Hold! is not that another proof of my misjudging selfishness? Is not this to give to my friend that arrogance which I should possess in her circumstances, and that all my intercourse with her and observation of her conduct, show to be foreign to her temper?

It is, and so I will henceforth, if I can, have done with apologies. I will talk to

you without reserve, and be apprehensive of nothing less than of tiring or disgusting you; and now to return to what, I will own, fills much of my thoughts.

This stranger has not come among us yet. My brother is to bring him hither this evening. The poor Jessy is in tremors. And for what? Because it is a stranger that is coming. 'Tis partly that, but not all. If the stranger were a female, I should not, methinks, have these unquiet feelings. A female one can love and trust, and take without reluctance or misgivings to one's confidence; but a *man!* That is a different case, Sophia.

And yet my brother is a man; so was my father; and Ambrose, who daily shows his honest face within our door at morning and eve, excites no apprehension or uneasiness. And what more is this Colden? But he comes not as a visitant; he comes to take up his abode with us, to eat and sleep under this roof; be-

sides I never saw his face before, and my brother says he is young; loftily reserved; gravely dignified; severely beautiful; and such a one is coming, not to see us and to talk an hour and away again, but to live with us. O dear! I wish almost, that I had not consented to his coming.

I do not like to be looked at too closely, for too long a time. In all guises and attitudes, a man's scrutiny is painful, embarrassing. I shall never be at ease while he is present, that is certain. I shall think him always gazing at me, watching my looks, and trying to read my thoughts.

No, I will not consent to his coming. I will plead the trouble of a new member of the family. I will make my mother object to it. All about us is too humble and too coarse for such a guest. 'Twill never do. I wonder at my brother for not seeing its impropriety.

And yet it is too late to make objec-

tions now. It will appear girlish and capricious; it cannot be avoided, and I must make the best of it, I believe. And truth to say, these doubtings and misgivings are very foolish; they arise from vanity or inexperience, and at this age ought to be trampled on. Let him come then, if he will.

I have made all things ready for his reception. The *garden room* will just suit him. It was mine, to sit in only, and to work. My chamber adjoins it, but I must sit and work there no longer now; but I do not like that. How shall I part with this sweet recess? When they were alive it was my sisters' work room, but now it seems, I must enter it no more. A stranger will possess it, and a *man!* How chilling is that thought, my Julia!

Besides my own bed room is *so* near; a slight partition divides them, for the two apartments were once the same, and the two doors are not ten inches asunder.

I cannot go in; I cannot move about; I cannot stir a step, but—

O dear! O dear! It must never be. Why did I not think of these things before in time to prevent?—but it is still time. It *shall* be time. I will run away to my brother's this very moment, and tell him to excuse me to the stranger. Lie down, pen, the while.

I am quite disconcerted, Sophia, my brother was gone out, gone to Phillipson's, they told me, for the hour fixed upon is come. I had employed so much time in writing, that I knew not the exact hour. So I hastened back again with new fears, lest they should come, and I be out; my brother might well wonder and be angry at my absence, when the time had been so accurately preconcerted.

They had not arrived, however, so here am I again at my pen. 'Tis some relief; a sweet consolation to be writing this, to thee, my Sophia; 'tis so like talking as

we used to do, side by side at the very window of this garden room, that now must witness these delightful interviews no longer; and that—forgetful creature that I was! escaped my thoughts. Thou and I at these precious hours, used to withdraw thither, and converse without fear of interruption and intrusion, but now—

"Cost what it will I will revoke my consent; and yet it will look strange, whimsical, capricious, at the very time when he has actually come. But how, where shall I receive my friend when she comes, if dispossessed of this room?

"I will not part with it, that I am resolved; and seasonably resolved, for they are come. Two persons by their footsteps; my brother's one, the other a stranger. They ask for me, and here comes Hannah, with their message of "Tell Jessica I want her."

Ah! my friend! he is come indeed! I had not presence of mind to declare my resolution, so that he has actually taken up his abode with us.

What changes may one short day make in one's condition! Methinks I am not the same as when I last wrote, yet things have not been quite as I expected: but I will tell you every thing in order as it happened.

By the way, who would have thought that I should ever have become so fond of my pen? My brother looked in just now—"Writing Jessica? This is a new passion, indifference to books is usually coupled with antipathy to writing. I am glad to see it, my dear, and hope when one is come, the other will not linger long behind."

"So do I brother, but Jessy always loved to talk when her heart was full, and any one would listen to her, and this is *but* talking."

"Not quite true, Jessy. Somewhat

more was needed, than a full heart and docile listener. The last you always had in me; but you wanted what only your charming correspondent could furnish, and may you value the new found blessing as it deserves."

"I join in thy prayer brother."

And, Sophia, it is true. To any other than my charming correspondent, I never could have fretted thus without reserve—but this again is rambling from my theme; to return to it then:

"This is my sister Jessica, Mr. Colden; a good girl, who will never want the will at least to oblige you." I curtsied low to what I supposed was a low bow from him, for I could not look up, nor utter any thing like welcome. I had a pretty speech ready, that by oft repeating I hoped to have by rote, for this occasion, and I had not forgotten it, but to articulate a syllable was not in my power. How is it, Sophia, that I, who have so much of an ideal kind of magnanimity; who so

much value gracefulness in others, should yet be destitute myself?

To look at him with no immodest stedfastness, with intelligence all benignant and smiling; the utterance ready and fluent; in words all promptitude, in gestures all harmony: that was my previous wish, and I laboured for it but in vain. What cowardice to tremble, shrink, and look down at the scowling wrath of a fellow creature. What folly to be thus dismayed in the presence of benignity and kindness, merely because they sit upon the brow of a *man* and a *stranger!*

But so it was: thy Jessica was thus cowardly, thus silly. My brother saw my weakness, and his eye, when mine chanced to steal a glance at him, rebuked me for it. He endeavoured by easy conversation, to reinstate my composure.

I forgot my objections to the stranger's residence with us. All were swallowed up in these new tumults. I struggled hard to look up, but could not, for fear

of encountering his glances. What a simpleton was I! Sheer vanity 'tis plain, to imagine myself the only object in the room claiming *his* scrutiny, yet till now, I had not thought myself vain.

My brother desired him to look at that *spar* on the mantle-piece. In doing this, thought I, he will turn away his eyes from me, so I will venture to catch a glimpse of him.

It soon appeared, greatly to my relief, and somewhat to my humiliation, that no object attracted less of his attention than myself. He set me down at once, no doubt, from the childishness of my demeanour, as an ill bred girl, and therefore, not meriting a second glance.

I looked at him while he bent down his head to examine the stone. The candle stood beside, so that all its light fell upon his countenance and form. My view was momentary, and yet it left nothing, I believe, to be supplied by after observation. I have seen him since in different atti-

tudes, but they are all new positions of the picture which I saw at first.

But why all this minuteness? Did I never see a man before? Never, my Sophia, in the present situation. Had I met him in the street, in a public room, or a stage boat, none of these emotions, none of this cautious yet eager scrutiny had happened; for then you know there had been no need. But he was one with whom I was to *dwell*; whom I was to see the livelong day, with whom I was to sit in the same room, and at the same board; whose accommodation I was to study; and whose constant and near approach would bring about conversation between us. Surely I had some interest in examining the face and manners of one, in this relation to me.

And I did examine them, for he left me at full liberty to do so. After one or two glances stolen at his face, while he talked to my brother, I perceived clearly enough, that he did not think of me as

of one present: never looked towards me, but as it seemed by chance, and never spoke to me at all.

Shall I own to thee, Sophia, that this neglect a little mortified thy proud friend! but it was of some benefit; it placed me somewhat at my ease. I was able to look at him attentively and listen to his discourse. My throbs disappeared, and my fingers sought no longer employment, by drumming on the arm of my chair.

Yet I ought not to be mortified, I think; for this man is not sullen or contemptuous. He forgot me not, it seemed, because of my own insignificance and littleness, but the greater excellence of those objects that employed his attention. And why should he think of me? Never before, Sophia, did I discover so much vanity in my heart, but I am almost cured of it already; it has all gone away, indeed it has.

Why, repeated I, as I had put up my

hair before the glass, going to bed, why should he think of me? A mere moveable, a drudge, a something useful in putting sticks together for a fire, a machine to pour out tea, to make whole a rent garment—that is all.

As to person, what am I? Women have charmed merely by their looks, their symmetry, their speaking eyes, their snow-white foreheads; but these, well-a-day, are none of mine—poor unsightly, brown, diminutive thing that I am, what are my pretensions?

But what a rambler am I? more than usual, I believe. How devious and volant is my quill! but I must restrain myself to some degree of method; else, instead of pleasing, I shall tire you; darken and bewilder by confusion, instead of ranging my ideas and my incidents in radiant files, and beauteous order. O! what a charm there is in order, with its lightsomeness and regular-

ity, from the airy spell of Sophia's harp, down—to my pots and kettles.

But now with all my thoughts untold, I must end my letter for the present.

I dream often of you, Sophia; dream but half as often of thy Jessica, and she will be happy.

No I will not be incoherent for all that. Are you not afraid of spoiling me, Sophia. But yours shall be the penalty, for since you ask it, you shall have it in abundance.

I used to write on the table below, but I do not like to write before him; he may ask to see what I write, perhaps, and that will place me in a distressful case: so I removed my *pine board* to my chamber, and neatly fitted it to my window case; glad I am of the change. It is so much for the better, here it is lightsome, and my window overlooks so pleasant a green; and here there is such

quiet, such security; for I bolt the door. In going to and from his chamber he comes so near as to brush against my door, and methinks I would not be seen by him or to be thought by him to be within, when he passes to and fro. I am little in danger of detection, I believe, for this is the third day of his residence with us, and yet he has not spent an hour at home, but at night and at meals. 'Tis true, the weather has been fine. The case may vary when it turns to rainy, bleak and cold. We shall see; but I have not told you what happened at our first meeting, have I? No. Well then take it now.

He talked much to my brother; yet is not talkative: yielded to the impulse of my brother's questions: speaking, I thought, not from inclination, but from complacency; as if he would have been, not more perhaps, but equally satisfied with being silent.

Harry, you know, loves to converse in

his way. A great dealer is he in moral distinctions, deeply read in history, and an endless speculator upon government. Methinks, Colden is like him in these respects, he listened with such intelligent attention; and what he said, when my brother called upon him for his opinion and waited his replies, was so accurate, so just.

Do not smile at me, Sophia, I know what you would say. Well do I know my own ignorance; the fallacy of all my decisions: but I give you my thoughts as they come: not as true, but simply as mine.

I told you that I loved to be a listener to rational conversation. Here, you may well suppose, I listened eagerly; all was so new. Harry, though my brother, I had scarcely ever before heard in this kind of discourse; and Colden's looks, tones, sentiments, were so little like the few whom I had heard talk!

Well it was that he did not sometimes

glance at me. As bold he would have thought me now, with my staring eyes, as at first, he might have thought me timorous.

My brother, at length, it being late, rose to go. Now did my tremblings and embarrassments return. To be thus left alone with him, and obliged to say something! and to end the conversation so soon!

My brother retired, and a pause very painful to me followed; but Colden ended it by saying: Shall I take this light? I will go if you please to my chamber. Yes, yes, stammered I, and Hannah appearing just then, I directed her to show him the way to his apartment. I had scarcely voice enough to return his — "good night."

Commonly, I no sooner lay my head upon the pillow, than I am in deep sleep. It was not so to-night. Such a throng of images, such misgivings, may I call them, at my heart — But my language, Sophia,

is very poor; for half my feelings I want words. Shame upon me for profiting so little by your conversation and your letters! All I have, indeed, I owe to you, but that all is too, too little. Often have I wanted suitable expressions, but never more than now, I think; for I never felt thus before. My situation now has no parallel in my past life.

How silly are these feminine timidities! Often have I heard them described as attendant upon solitude — darkness. 'Till now I never understood the describer; *'till now*, I say, for surely these sensations answer to the picture so often drawn of panic, restlessness, dread of we know not what; phantastic misinterpretings of noises and shadows.

But the object of my dread was not solitude or darkness: these were ever friendly to my peace. To be *alone* have I often thought, on entering my little chamber, what comforts, what serenities does it bestow: except when my Sophia

has been thought of, then has even solitude, with all its safety and its stillness, been irksome. Much as I love to be alone, Sophia, I would always exchange my solitary pleasures for the blessings of thy company. My pillow has its charms; sweetly do I rest my cheek upon it, but far more sweetly would I lay mine upon thy cheek.

You honoured me once you know, with your company for one night. How delighted was I, yet how ashamed to introduce you to my humble cot. Shall I ever forget that night! we talked till past three; and such unbosoming of all your feelings, all your pleasures and cares, and what you called your foibles; spots in the sunny brightness of your character. Ever since that night have I been a new creature; to be locked in your arms; to share your pillow with you, gave new force, new existence to the love which before united us; often shall we pass

such nights when thou and I are safe together at Wortleyfield.

But how do these remembrances seduce me from the present scene!

Why these panics, my friend? Was I not still alone and safe? Certainly. What could I fear? But this man under the same roof: in the room adjoining: his footsteps and the very movements of the furniture overheard, or capable of being so; for this night I heard nothing; all was still long before I came up. I took care of that.

I rebuked myself for these terrors, but they staid throughout the night, in spite of my — "Begone." Sometimes they withdrew or momentarily subsided, when the late conversation recurred. I took a new view of his features, and ran over all that he had said. The talk was cursory and miscellaneous; how did every word call up feelings of courage or despondency in my heart; chiefly of the latter; for they more often talked of

things of which I was wholly ignorant, than on subjects I knew aught about.

How very gross is my ignorance, how limited, how ideot-like my faculties! Have I common sense, I wonder! Never saw I so clearly; never despised I so much my own ignorance, as on this night. Never did my soul droop so much under this load of self-contempt.

How have you contrived, Sophia, to hide my ignorance from me so long? But I never saw you in company with others; and your friendly pity was, no doubt, careful to adopt your style and your topics to my childish capacities; yet you love me, you write; you talk to me without reserve; in spite of my deficiencies, you treat me with respect and tenderness. How does it happen?

You seem to be delighted too with our subjects of discourse. You freely discuss them; at every moment I see your superiority to me; you instruct me without distressing or permanently humbling me.

Your regard for me raises me as high as your proofs of excellence have otherwise a tendency to sink me. The higher you are above me, your esteem exalts me the more, for it places me, in some sort, on a level with yourself.

But we talk together in a different manner from Colden and my brother. We talk of what each has seen and felt. The comments, the reflections you make, the specimens of wit, address, and force of mind are what distinguishes you so much in my eyes. We neither of us go out of our own sphere; not to know what you know, may not always be to my discredit, since I cannot be in your house, and surrounded by your company, while I am mewed up in my own cottage. Daily incidents, and dialogues, displays of character you meet with, are your subjects; and these, from your way of life, so different from mine, must be far more numerous, various, and important, and the improvement you thence derive, and

the reflections that are thence suggested, must unspeakably excel mine.

But Colden and Harry talk not thus. They speak of persons and things which they could not see with their own eyes; thousands of miles off, or living ages ago; events they talked about, not affecting the happiness or fortunes of one or a few insignificants, and not limited to a year or two, or a life or two, but governing the fate of nations and worlds, for centuries of years. And all the time how shrunk am I into my little despicable shell!

I knew nothing of the Regent Orleans and his parliaments: the causes of the late war: the siege of Havanna and Prague, and the good or bad conditions of peace that were offered and received. I don't know what kind of rule it is that the English at home exercise over the English in America. I don't know how far it is, and what it is (I suppose it to be sea), that divides one from the other.

How should so unread a simpleton as I know these things?

And what is worse, I never shall know them. To know any thing, I fancy we must begin soon. We may dare to look forward after twenty-two, nay after four score and two; but what can she expect, who has not begun till after twenty-two?

I can no more at present.

He rose by day dawn. I rose soon after him. I am seldom such an early riser, but I could not sleep; so I sat down at my window till my mother called.

His breakfast was set in due season. Nothing said but a cold "Good-morrow," as he entered: seeing the arrangement of my table, and I seating myself at it, he also sat down.

The bread was broken and the cup lifted not like one that was hungry, nor, as I at first feared, like one that disrelished his meal, but simply as if thought

was too busy to allow much attention to the cravings of nature. His eye fixed upon a knot in the table, or glancing through the window with all the unsteadiness of inattention. So deep in thought was he that I ventured to observe him closely.

Thy pencil, my friend, might show this face as it ought to be shown. My words cannot. I am sorry to see it as I see it. As I see it in his absence would answer the painter's end. Yet by candle-light, it looked, I know not why, with softer lineaments than at the breakfast table. The *spar* he said was beautiful; he had never seen a specimen so highly polished; pleasure sparkled on his features, and they somewhat gleamed with the social spirit, his heart appearing to be opened by the previous conversation with Harry.

Now there was an air widely different; not boisterous or sullen, nor yet austere. Far from any of these was it, yet I cannot tell what it was. But surely it de-

noted not a mind at ease; the soul within was not at peace with fortune. Once or twice looking through the window, but in such a way as showed him wholly unobservant of the objects before him, I saw his brows folded and his eyes glisten: then he would recover his attention to things around him, and lift the cup to his lips, that for some minutes before had been idle in his hand.

What, at that moment, Sophia, was he thinking of? Methinks I would give a great deal to know. It was a sorrowful strain. His fortune must be singular and mournful, to make him choose this way of life. To have no company, no business of any kind, to shun discourse as he was said to do, at Philipson's, with all mankind, not to talk to any of the family, though good people: me, he might naturally overlook and think not worth a word, but *all* others he equally kept at a distance.

Here he is, an exile from some foreign

country; not accompanied by any of his kindred or friends: he must have some relations; young as he, his parents, it is likely, are still alive. He must have sisters; perhaps, Sophia, he has a wife.

What would I give to know his true situation? He is not married, one would think, for would he not be accompanied by his wife? Could any calamity induce her to desert him? I am extremely anxious to discover the truth; but how? He will not tell it me himself.

He quickly dispatched his breakfast, and spent the morning in his chamber. I suppose, because it rained. I was busy as usual at my needle. I wanted to sit in my chamber, but I was unwilling to go up while he was in his room. It was a foolish reluctance to be sure, but I could not drive it away.

I was thinking all the time of this man. How different are my thoughts now from what they used to be before he came! Then I was in a settled calm,

vacant of all emotion, and pondering chiefly on past events, but the present seems now to fill up my whole soul.

After dinner, the weather clearing up, he went out and returned to tea, after which he went out again. The two last meals passed like the first, without a syllable uttered by either, and the next day was but the counterpart of the day before.

Whither does he go? Out of town, Philipson says; but for what end? Merely for the sake of exercise and meditation? That must be the end, to be sure, for what else can it be!

My brother came last evening to see him, but Colden being abroad, sat an hour with me. He inquired how I liked my guest? I told him all that I had observed and thought about him, and asked him, in my turn, what was his opinion.

"He is certainly," said he, "a remarkable man. He has education and refinement. His knowledge is extensive

and of the most valuable kind. He is a proficient in several languages and sciences, and talks of the affairs of the world like one that had not acquired the knowledge at a distance or at second hand. Yet there is a perplexing mystery about him; nobody in this part of the world knows him. His aversion to society may be his habitual humour. It may proceed from a deeply rooted melancholy, occasioned by some recent and great disasters, or it may arise from conscious guilt, from terror of detection."

"Good Heaven! brother, what do you mean by that? From guilt?"

"That is one conjecture; not, in itself probable, I own; but perhaps, not less so than others."

"But what guilt can you conceive?"

"None. It is a bare conjecture. I pretend not to specify what guilt, or to point out the true cause; as to what he has been it is impossible to form any plausible guess, but it is evident that he

is learned, amiable and accomplished, and I shall labour to make him more sociable."

Just then our guest entered. I was delighted to see the friendly manner in which he greeted my brother. Another conversation ensued, which ended with an invitation from Harry to dinner the next day.

He appeared not to have expected this, and was I thought a little embarrassed: he paused. Harry then added, "I invite you not as a formal guest, but as a friend, and merely to show you the way to a house, where I hope you will be a frequent and familiar visitant; you will therefore find only my own family, and the same frugal fare that is provided for you here."

This pleased him, and he readily consented to go. To-day is serene and bright. He went out as usual, and not being to return at noon, will leave me alone, I suppose, till night.

But why, Sophia, do I talk to thee of nobody but this man? Why scarcely think I on any other subject? 'Tis the novelty of this change I suppose, and so will disappear in a few days or weeks, and I shall be well pleased when it does so. My present feelings are unpleasant; I feel I know not what of disquiet and perplexity. I am not, if I may so say, at home to myself; I sometimes wish that we had never been troubled with this guest. Things are not so orderly, so private, so tranquil, as they used to be under this roof, when my mother, my Hannah, and myself, were its only tenants; but the evil, if it be one, is without remedy, so I must make the best of it. Adieu.

I can hardly believe that my poor prate can give you pleasure, Sophia, but since you say as much, to be sure it must

be so. Thy praise is a sweet encourager. Without it, much as I have come to love the pen, I should not indulge so often my scribbling vein.

By the way, is not this sudden fondness for writing, in one so awkward at the quill as I am, a little surprising? Nothing will serve, but once a day at least must I seat myself here, and scribble. If I miss doing so, it is like omitting a customary meal.

My mother and household affairs employ most of the day, but my mother sleeps an hour or two after dinner, and retires for the night at ten. At these times I am left to myself, and I used to spend them chiefly in the garden room, but now I hie me to my own chamber. The pen lies so near and so enticingly, my thoughts are so busily engaged with thee or with this new comer; and this being the only way to converse with thee, I mostly yield to the temptation,

and lay by my work. What I begin in the afternoon, I finish if I can at night.

But do not think me an idler, Sophia. There are other times of the day, when I am as diligent a workwoman as ever, but I always told you that sewing was my entertainment, and I applied to it so much, not because it was absolutely necessary, but because I had nothing else to do, or nothing else that I liked to do; now I like writing better, and so I write, yet should not do so, I suspect, if my Sophia were not thus kindly eager to read what I write.

You tell me to relate all that I think, and all that occurs respecting our guest. Nothing new has occurred. Every thing is uniform. The same silence at meals; the same wandering abroad, and the same seclusion in his chamber as at first. 'Tis very strange, Sophia. I must needs say, I do not like it at all; but how shall I help myself?

I want him to talk to me a little; a

word or two, methinks, he might oblige me with, as we sit opposite at table. If it were only, "Your bread is well baked," "Your glass is a clear glass," it would be something better than total silence, methinks.

But if he has lost his tongue in my company, he might show some attention by his looks, at least. But he comes and goes, and sits at dinner, just as if surrounded by unconscious tables and chairs. He looks across me, as it were, as his eye roves about, just as if I were a flitting shadow on the white wall, or a two legged pine table that could move itself.

This is not polite, surely. 'Tis not kind. A kind temper would not let him act thus superciliously. To be wrapt up in his own gloomy thoughts, to treat a human creature, whom he sees so often, and a woman too, and young too, and not talkative or forward, I will venture to say, as if she were a thing inanimate.

He deems me, without doubt, a simpleton as I am; but how does he know but that I have some sensibility and some knowledge? This cannot be found out, but on the trial. He looks for nothing in me congenial with his own views and pursuits; and nothing, indeed, there is; but are men to act with no view but to *receive* pleasure? Ought they not, sometimes, to aim at giving it?

I, a poor girl, ignorant, forlorn, might be greatly benefited by the conversation of such an one as he. That condescension would so flatter me! I should be made better and wiser by his talk; and not only that, but I should be gratified, delighted, by such notice; and he himself surely would be no loser. These melancholy musings that afflict him now, would be driven away by more cheerful images: thus would he secure himself as much pleasure as he gives to another: but he does not perceive this, morose, incommunicative creature that he is.

I am displeased with him, Sophia. I blame myself for consenting to his coming. All before was so serene, so unruffled, but now—

He has come in I see, and our supper time is arrived. All was ready for Hannah to bring in, and she was to bring it in as soon as he came. So I must go down. Yet that is an idle formality; he can dispatch his meal as well in my absence as my presence: nay, would be better pleased, I warrant you, that I would stay away: and I *will* stay. He shall eat by himself this time, and I will write on as if such—

No. I want not to eat this evening, but see that he is well served. Hannah came up to tell me all was ready, but I will not go. I am, just now, a little sullen. I believe I could not look on him as kindly, as, perhaps, I ought. I will write away my spleen before I see him, if possible.

Yet I cannot write. What ails me, Sophia? My fingers are unsteady. My heart flutters and misgives me much. I will take to my needle, and see if that will pacify its tremors.

Ah! my friend! I was much to blame a while ago. Now do I see my fault. Could I be so peevish and absurd! What a change will a few minutes, will a single word make in our feelings! Why see I things, and judge of things so differently at different times?

"Where's Jessica?" said he, after a second or third sip, and looking at the girl, that stood at the window.

"She's up stairs. She does not want any tea to-night."

"She's well, I hope," anxiously rejoined he.

"O, yes, very well."

—Not quite true, girl—my mind was

not well. A bad passion possessed it, but—strange!—how all vanished, in an instant, when these questions of our guest were told me by Hannah. This was all he said. Satisfied, it seemed, by her assurance, he relapsed into thoughtfulness, and having drained his bowl, went up to his chamber. I heard him coming. Into what new flutters was I thrown. My door, carelessly, had been left open, and he must pass it going to his own, and so could not help seeing me. And what if he did! What timorous creatures are we women: for I suppose the rest of girls are like myself in this particular; there seems a kind of nature in it.

My apprehensions were groundless, as it proved. What apprehensions? I don't know. He passed the door, not observing me, and soon afterwards Hannah came up, and whisperingly told me what he had said.

Now did my cheeks glow, and my heart

flutter indeed. How did I upbraid myself for my folly; my arrogance. I am not then a mere inanimate, senseless piece of furniture in his eyes. He can think of me, can ask if *I am well*, and with an anxious tone ask it? While I, an obdurate and selfish creature, was accusing him of treating me with scorn, and absented myself through resentment; and for what?

Because, my highness, forsooth, had not been noticed; had not been courted to talk; because my little humours and caprices were not watched and gratified. And who am I, that my existence or my health should be of value in his eyes? what have I done to prove myself better than the dirt I tread on? In what *am* I better?

Compunction has a very sharp sting, my Sophia. I fell it now, for the first time, I believe; yet still I feel it not alone. There came pleasure along with it; a pure delight, not less new to me,

than my remorse; yet why was I pleased?

My mother calls. Methinks I would be spared attending on her just now, for I want to write on; but thou art a selfish desire, and so I banish thee. To-morrow will be here time enough.

Now I have communed with my pillow, let me ask again, why these few words of our guest pleased me so much. To find him with some humanity about him, is truly no such extraordinary thing. Another proof of my short-sightedness, Sophia; always surprised at instances of kindness in another. Whence could I get such bad thoughts of mankind, I wonder? I copy from my despicable self, no doubt; yet not in this case, for should I, in Colden's circumstances, have behaved so monstrously? I think not.

A taciturnity, an inattention to me so uniform! What else could I infer, but

that he cared not for me a straw? that my absence or presence, my death or life, were equally indifferent! But I see now my mistake, I am glad of it, yet why *so* glad? I cannot tell why, but I am very glad notwithstanding.

Now I long for breakfast time! I want, methinks, to atone for my foolish misbehaviour last night. No doubt, on seeing me again, he will ask me concerning my health, and my absence from the tea table. I shall be puzzled for an answer. To be talked to by him; to have those eyes of his fixed upon me, such eyes, Sophia! They often made me think of yours, yet how unlike are they to my Sophia's! Thine so intelligently sweet! Such a blue serene! But his!—But here again, my friend, I want thy words. Fain would I describe them if I could.

But if he should look at me, and ask me, what shall I say? How shall I look? Now again these flutters, these burning cheeks! Surely he will think me quite

a fool, for I shall want articulation. Confidence to look up will be denied me. Then will my perverse fingers fall to twining with each other, to drumming the window ledge, to pulling out threads from my handkerchief. Did I ever think that I should prove such a simpleton?

Yet I must say something—but I hope he may not speak to me. My appearance alone will answer his inquiries. What can I do, but sit in stupid silence at the same table, looking at him and from him, just as *his* looks give me leave! What a despicable trifling exhibition. In another I might laugh at it, but that I should be the actor makes me weep.

How as I come to know myself better, do I more and more despise myself? What will at last become of me, if I go on making new discoveries of my imbecility at every change of situation? Such a wavering, timorous creature! Something must be wrong within me. If I saw clearly what is right to be done,

should I feel all these hesitations and reluctances in doing it?

What is there in this man to make me fear him? Why faulter and shudder in his presence, more than in another's? Why shrink and be abashed because he speaks to me, and yet be discontented and resentful when he forbears to speak; to wish his notice, when I think he will not give it, and tremblingly to shun it, when he offers it? I could beat myself for this folly.

But he is come, and breakfast waits. Shall I go down? Half a mind not to go: shall feel so awkwardly. Yet not to go! How will that look? What excuse — a future meeting still more difficult. Fie upon me! "Yes, girl, I come."

I needed not be so apprehensive, not I. Speak to me, indeed! The same as

if an empty chair stood there. Not a syllable besides a faint, half articulate, *fashioned-of-itself* "Good morrow." All in a hurry I, eating very fast, pouring out small portions of my tea at a time, and clattering cup with saucer as I poured, and sipping *nicely*, all to show no leisure to hear him, to deter him from speaking to me.

Yet all these impediments were needless: mute as a stone, no sign of the slightest inclination to open his lips; eye always gazing vacantly through the window, or cast up ceiling-ward. He finished sooner than I, and left me at the table.—How did my resentments swell my heart; the tears would not be kept down!

Such was he at dinner too, but there I felt not disappointment. I was prepared for his neglect. How mournful has been this day! all luminous abroad! quiet the air, serene the sky, and its azure

checkered by a thousand silvery effulgencies! but none of these things affected me as once they did.

The livelong day uneasily sat I at my work. My mother's afternoon repose allowed me to retire hither and I did so: but not as yesterday, to my pen. I could not write. Indignant, sorrowful, mortified, perplexed, was ever creature so absurdly inconsistent as thy Jessy?

I am not happy, yet why not? What has happened to make me different from the being that I was a month ago. I am different; quite an altered creature, Sophia; an unhappy alteration too. I can do nothing; I have not patience to write. The deepest humiliation has seized my heart, and the pain it gives me is more than I can bear. I must take myself to task.

I will walk, I believe; 'tis long since I visited the river's pebbly shore, and the twilight now is gratefully cool, serenely solemn. 'Tis a long time since I rambled

there. All my habits have been changed of late. I will try to muse away my wandering hours as I used to do. To feign myself beside my Marianne and Sally in their evening stroll. My heart has grown unfaithful to their memory. I have not thought of them once these three days. So sweet a calm as their gentle apparitions, flitting about me, used to breathe over my soul! Will it never be so again! I hope it will. I will try for it at least.

How could you alarm me so? I am half displeased with you; I think my tumults are scarcely hushed yet, though an hour since I read your letter. In *love*, Sophia! What an hateful, what a frightful insinuation is that! for at first I was startled, terrified—and whence my terror? Surely my heart pleaded not guilty to the charge. But made thus abruptly, thus earnestly, and by one whom I so much revered! could I help a sudden dizziness—confusion of thoughts;

just, I fancy, as if awaking on the brink of a precipice.

I verily believe that I shrieked; startle and tremble I certainly did, and dropping the letter, buried my face in my pillow, for I had not left my room when Hannah brought it me. Had thy father written it, to tell me that his darling child had ventured too far into the whirlpool, in her evening bath, and was swallowed up for ever—Somewhat so do I feel now.

O my friend, add not to my unhappiness by thy scorn; despise me thou must, for am I not worthy to be despised? but not with *this* contempt. Not so very silly yet, assure thyself my friend, so very wicked. In my mind 'twould be wickedness to love; yet that would be a term too good for me. To *love*, Sophia! —Not indiscreet, or rash or wicked, should I be in such a case, but lunatic, my Sophia. The very imputation almost

makes me so. Surely you forget that Colden has not been here ten days; turn over again my late letters; mark their dates. What could I have written to suggest so wild a thought? Why, Sophia, he has scarcely spoken ten words to me, and these the cold formalities of "good morrow" and "good night." I have seen him, putting all the minutes of our silent intercourse together, scarcely two hours, and yet thou tell'st me, *I'm in love!*

Grant me patience, good Heaven, or give me back the esteem of my friend! Yet how am I perplexed!—To write so coolly as you do, and call me by the tenderest names: yet charge me with what would place my judgment below infancy.

I wish I had my late letters to you before me. I would examine them again, and see what has inspired my friend with this thought. Yet, I think I have every tittle of them in memory; and have

conned carefully over all their contents; and nothing do I recollect to have said, that could justify you in believing—

But why dwell I on so hateful a theme? Why countenance I thus, by reasoning on the matter, so childish a chimera? Indeed Sophia, if thy suspicion were true, I should hate or despise myself—I don't know which I should most deserve, certainly both in the highest degree.

For only think, Sophia, on the difference between us; the distance that severs this man from me; no eye can measure it, 'tis so wide, where could any body look for a contrast to his air, his visage, his stature, his mien, so lofty, grave, dignified, intelligent, but in thee, poor Jessy!

As to his mind, little as I know of that, it is clear that we are just as opposite in that respect as in the other. Besides, I know him not. Is not his past life a blank to me; an utter void! His mind is full of something, but what that something is, I am quite as ignorant as I am

of what is passing in the moon. Nay, what proof have I that he is not married? And to love, Sophia, while that is an undecided question! think not, I beseech you, so meanly of me.

There goes somebody: a man, I guess so by the hat. The fence hides all the rest of him, or *her*; for possibly it is a woman. The hat you know, is sometimes worn by the lower class of our sex. I have seen it myself, drawing at the cistern, or chopping up a log.

But it *may* be a man, and therefore I will *love* him. Love whom? He that is creeping along the outside of the fence there; a man, I will suppose it to be, on the evidence of the hat.

"But what know you of the wearer; is he old or young, married or single, foolish or wise, good or bad, white or black?"

No matter. Whoever he be. I am all enamoured of him. I shall die, if he returns not my passion."

"How now, mad cap! What's come to thee? Hast thou lost thy wits? Hold thy tongue child, keep thy foolish thoughts at home, and mind thy work!"

And now, Sophia, tell me if you can, the difference between such a girl, and that girl who, in my situation should fall in love with our guest. There is a difference indeed, but all to my disadvantage. I know no more of Colden than of *him* there (he has just now raised himself above the fence-top, and proves to be a woman: a cartman's wife that lives near) but all that I know are only proofs of our mutual distance; the contrariness of our characters and tastes. So that the folly of my love would even exceed that of doating on the hat. To love the *unseen* who *may* be what we wish, is wiser than to love the *seen*, whose visibles are only unfitness, and which, if even they were *not* unfitnesses, are still so small a part of the being, and a part so unimportant, that he might as well be not seen at all.

I am no adept in these things, Sophia, I pretend not to be so. True, no doubt, as you say, we are not always aware of the tendency of our own feelings, but here there surely can be no room to doubt. For need I repeat—but I am ashamed to repeat things so evident! It was foolish to dwell upon a notion so fantastic so long. So here, Sophia, I stop.

I have just parted from Harry, and in a very peevish mood. I am harassed: I am eaten up, I think, by my vexation. A thousand times have I wept. The very fall of inanimate nature has often called up tears; but what different feelings occasioned those tears, from the tears that are now blotting my paper!

How harsh is the voice of blame from those we love! I deserve not thy censure, Harry, and that comforts me but little! Yet my brother meant no ill; his concern for my happiness only dictated

what he said. As his own life does he love his sister, and hence is he anxious for my welfare. Benevolent and tender was he in his councils and his cautions. His intention was kind, of a piece with his treatment of me from childhood up to this hour, and let me only think of his intention, and be grateful for that.

Yet to be thought to need such cautions; not from my brother only but my friend! No, my heart never knew pain till now. Till now all has been joyous with me. Full of glee, lightly did my spirits dance, some ten years ago; but since my childish days have disappeared, I have shaken hands with gaiety, yet never, I may say, was I unhappy. To be unhappy is to be thus, and never before was I thus. Something must be wrong in my behaviour, since on that are founded such suspicions. I must scrutinize it closely. Methinks I *would* be wrong, for then my friend and my brother would be justified.

But why have such a basis for his cautions? Why is my brother thus prone to construe into evil, into guilt, the mystery so studied by our guest? And from my reluctance to admit his suspicions; my solicitude to vindicate his friend, why so perversely infer that I am in danger of loving him.

Cannot I revere talents; cannot I pity the unfortunate, without these selfish views? Cannot I be just without incurring such humiliating charges?

"Thou art wrong, Jessy," (cried my brother) "I reproach you not for what is done. I only caution you against the possible, the future. My caution may be useless. The strength of your mind may serve you against the evil, though no caution were given. So much the better. The caution has done no good, 'tis true, but then, my sister, it has done no harm. Why then be displeased? knowing too that I mean you only good. Let me tell you, Jessy, the manner in which you have

received my caution is—a little unaccountable. A severe judge might think the caution the more needful, in proportion as it was heard with impatience. But I judge not severely, I judge as the kindest and fondest heart can judge.

"Much as I esteem you, Jessy, I do not believe you a witch, an oracle, guided in all you do by inspiration; in all you say by prophecy. After all, you are only a woman: a young one too, ignorant of most things, and most of all, of the world. You are no match for the cunning of mankind, for the tricks of your own heart; an easy dupe would you prove, I am afraid, to both. How should it be otherwise? Where should you get your knowledge? From books? poor preceptors these of the wordly knowledge? But poor as they are, they have taught you nothing. They are not of your acquaintance.

"From observation? You, shut up in your cottage, holding no converse, but

with your Hannah and your *Puss*, what have you observed?

"—There again you wrong me, Jessy. I am *not* Colden's enemy. I am only my sister's friend. As to what may be concealed under this mystery, I have mentioned possibilities only. They do not influence my conduct, you say. Why, to be sure I am not a girl as you are, Jessy. I see clearly my way; there is no danger of my reposing undue confidence; my property, my liberty, my life, I shall never need to put into his keeping. I cannot *fall in love* with him. Should he go to the world's end; should he give his affections as a lover and a husband to a Cherokee squaw, my peace will be unaffected.

"But my peace, brother, you think will not be unaffected!"

"Pervert not my meaning, Jessy, I have spoken plainly enough."

"O, my dear brother, what has come to me to merit all this chiding?"

"This *chiding*, as you call it, is a creature of your own fancy. Did you love, with all your soul this man, I should not chide you; it would be barbarous to do so. I have said nothing as if I supposed you loved him; I have merely argued on a possibility. That there is danger, is suggested more by the knowledge of your tenderness and purity of heart, your guileless, frank, unsuspicious temper, than from any foreign considerations. If I overrate the danger, it is because I overrate your good qualities; I am too deeply concerned in your safety. If my judgment be clouded, it is clouded by affection. If I raise needless fences and plant a needless watch round your happiness, why is it but because that happiness is so dear to me?

"You are no common girl. Though no prodigy, yet I know no woman of your age who thinks and acts in the same manner. My confidence in you is

greater than I would place in another, older, more wary, more proficient in the passions than you are.

"Had you not been thus superior, had you not possessed this confidence, should I, think you, have placed a man like this under the same roof; have allowed him to live, in some sense alone with you, for your mother and your Hannah are, in this respect, as nobody. A man thus noble and attractive in his person, rich in mental gifts: his past life and his genuine principles thus totally unknown?

"Many persons have expressed their surprise that I should have done this; but the danger which they feared, I could not fear."

"Lord bless me, brother, I do not understand you! Danger! What danger can you mean?"

"No matter what, if you really do not take my meaning, since, as I told you, I did not and cannot fear it."

After a little pause, I saw what he meant. How am I fallen, Sophy! What a world do we live in! but my brother feared not for me, yet for those who knew me to hold it for an instant in their mind was so opprobrious to me.

Much besides this, my brother said, all so strange, so humbling to my honest pride, *honest* I may surely call it, that I shall hate to remember it.

I asked him, "if any thing in my behaviour"—I could not say more, but by the indignant glow of my cheeks. He hesitated to reply. "Why no," said he, at last, "I have seldom seen you together. You tell me that you have had no conversation with him, but yet—but I fear to check your ingenuous spirit."

"Fear not that brother. No consequence shall make me a dissembler to you. I will always repose my feelings in your ear, whatever inference your judgment may draw from them. Tell me

what you have observed in me to occasion uneasiness."

"Perhaps, I have inferred too much. In youthful minds, in inexperienced minds, in female minds, where sensibilities are genuine and fervent, admiration and compassion, for persons of a different sex, are so apt to slide into a different sentiment, and the compassionater herself all the while unconscious of what is going on within, that I have, I own, Jessy, been somewhat uneasy.

"Such interest as you take in this man; such delight as your sparkling eye betrays while listening to him; such craving after all I can tell you of him; such eagerness to vindicate him from my disparaging conjectures; such humiliation as his neglect of you occasions! All these are worthy of your liberal heart. They argue nothing but that, at present, you admire and pity. All my apprehension relates to what *may be* —what structure time may raise on this foundation.

"Besides, when I reasoned thus upon appearances, I was not aware of what this conversation has partly disclosed; I did not know that my sister reasoned as she now seems to reason; I was far from thinking that the consequence alluded to, had, in your eyes, so few attractions and so many obstacles. Why, thought I, should this girl be vigilant to check those grateful impulses? Her heart was formed for love. She will never taste true happiness till she finds some being on whom to bestow all her affections. Why not bestow them on Colden, with all his graces and merits, whom she sees so nearly, and so often? What can thwart the natural course of her feelings, but the fear of not being requited, and what is there to instil such a fear?

"Enamoured hearts are seldom diffident of their own merit. Their gratitude, their services, they usually deem a sufficient recompense for the love they claim. Minds, in most respects equal,

seldom find any difficulty in uniting, and supposing Colden to be what he seems to be, there is far from being any remarkable disparity between him and Jessy."

"O! My brother," cried I, "in a painful confusion, how can you say so?"

"The strongest mind and the most enlightened, looks not, in woman, for various knowledge and studious zeal like its own. These are not the cementing powers between the sexes. These give not birth to love, and form not the charms of wedlock. It is the concord of hearts, the mingling of affections, that gives force to this bond. Does not Jessy know this, and may she not then make herself a merit in her love?

"That the difference of Colden's birth and education from your own, the uncertainty of his present condition, whence he comes, what connections or embarrassments he may have left behind, what stay he may make among us, and whither he will go, when he does go; that these uncertainties occupied so much place in

your mind as they now seem to do, I had no means of knowing till now. I rejoice that you allow these uncertainties so much weight. Let them, I admonish you most earnestly, let them always be present and outweigh every sentiment that his company may excite in your heart by mere complacency and good will."

And thus ended, my Sophy, a conference more painful to me than I can describe. Why do I repeat it to you? I have only called up again the pain it gave me; and now is my heart so greatly depressed, that I can write no more.

Cheer me, Sophia, by thy letters. Tell me what I should think, how I should act. I see that I am not fit, in your and my brother's opinion, to govern myself.

Never, Sophy, did I so much wish to be with you as now. I would be any where but here and in the company of this man. When in the same room, at

the same table, with him, my uneasiness is greatest, but loneliness and sleep do not take it away. These hints and precautions of you and my brother have bereaved me of my comforts. I know no inmates of my heart, but doubts, fears, and suspicions, and my heart detests such visitants.

I am afraid of doing wrong. I must act and speak, but I am no judge of consequences, and to mean well, will not always prevent mischief.

Can't I see you, Sophy? Will you not fetch me away? Your sweet retreat must have numberless charms at this season, and all is here so dusty and so hot. Such myriads of insects teazing us all day and stinging us all night. We live near the road, which is only an heap of dust, which wheels and horses, going to and fro all day, raise into clouds, that doors and windows cannot keep out, and that rests upon chairs and tables, polluting and disordering whatever it touches. The very

ivy at my back window is whitened and loaded with it.

And then the heat! I wonder such an air as this does not breed plagues worse than that of flies and gnats, which it does breed. Yet a worse plague it has bred in me; the plague of an impatient spirit; a plague worse than Egypt ever knew.

The sun at noon-day, shining full upon this low roof, makes every thing almost too hot to be touched. The night is not long enough to cool the air, and the breezes, of late, seem all to have passed through an oven before they reached us. Last night I chanced to leave a knife blade on the window—this morning, at ten, I saw it where it lay in the sunshine, and took it in. Will you believe me, Sophia? I was obliged instantly to drop it on the floor, it was so hot. I dropt it, else, I verily believe, it had scorched my fingers.

And in this weather, Sophia, must thy poor friend broil and bake, not her mut-

ton and potatoes merely, but *herself.* The stove must be brightened, morning and noon, the pot must be filled, whether the sun shines or not. This it is that makes my languor so extreme at this season. Hardly can I go up stairs. Indeed I am obliged to rest in going up. My aching knees absolutely require it.

I can eat scarcely any thing. My appetite goes quite away in summer, and it puzzles me to find out how I reach the autumn alive. Yet by summer's end I am scarcely half alive. Pale as ashes, meagre, spiritless, her substance half dissolved, is thy Jessy by the time the air begins to be refreshed by the gales of November.

I cannot bear it any longer. My brother says he will send his Jenny to keep house for me, whenever I choose to visit you: so send for me, Sophia, as soon as you can.

What a weak, foolish creature am I grown! I am quite other than I was. Some evil spirit has got hold of me, without doubt. He it was, surely, that made use of my pen, and wrote thee such a letter yesterday.

Such a letter, Sophia! For *me* to write. To paint my situation in such exaggerated colours: to determine to leave my mother! No. It was not I.

I am greatly astonished at the state of my mind, for these last three days. Surely, Sophia, my intellects have not been quite sound. Never did I feel before as I have lately done. Are there not cases of insanity, coming on without warning, and lasting for a little while; and has not this been such a one? I strongly suspect it has. It has gone, and methinks it never will come back again. Alas! What assurance can I have of that?

The heat! the dust! the insects! Did I ever complain of these before, and have I not always had as much reason? Many

days within this month have been as hot, as dry, and as stagnant as yesterday, yet I never repined at such trifling inconveniences. Whatever is painful in my condition, have I not chosen it, for my mother's sake? I need not stay in this cottage, but as long as I please. Has not that tutelary angel, to whom I now write, offered every good that the most aspiring heart can wish, and the proudest fortune bestow? I may live with her, all her leisure, luxuries and enjoyments may be mine too, if I please, and why do I not take them?

Because I must not, cannot, forsake my mother. I am not, indeed, fit to enter the high and the gay world. I was born for privacy, seclusion, and an humble lot. I love my cottage, for my own and my dear sister's sake, who lived and died under its roof; but I would not live in it alone, nor pass my time in it, as I now do, were I to take counsel of my own independent inclination.

None of this broiling and baking would I do, to serve myself. I would live as our guest does, and my food, preferable to my palate in itself, should cost me no trouble at all, and not one-tenth of the expense of our present living; but my mother cannot, and I wish her not, to change her habits merely to save me trouble.

I might persuade her too to leave this house, and go, as my brother has long wished us to do, a few miles from the city. There is many a sweet spot on the Hudson, where we might find a green and quiet abode, and to please me, my mother would consent to go; but this would be with much reluctance, and my brother would be obliged to supply from his own stock, the money which I now earn, and which is equal to my own maintenance.

You too, Sophia, have exhorted me to leave town, and offered the means necessary for doing it without injury. I have

not declined accepting the loan from any pride or perverseness of temper, but merely through regard to my mother's wishes, and because, in truth, my cottage and my homely tasks, are not displeasing to me.

Let me dispatch this letter, after yesterday's, without loss of time, that it may save you the trouble of sending for me. I have much to say to you, Sophia, but have not time just now.

Now am I tranquil and joyous once more. I feel, methinks, as I used to do. My brother's counsels, that humbled and afflicted me so much, are remembered with thankfulness and pleasure. His caution was indeed needless, but his kindness induced him to give it, and I should love him the better for his kindness.

Yet they had a deep influence for a time. The disquiets they gave me were always strongest in Colden's company, and

though I tried to behave with composure and collectedness before *him*, I could not succeed. Yet he seemed not to notice me till yesterday at tea. I had just finished my foolish letter to thee, and that employment had only disturbed me the more, when I was obliged to go down. For some time he was absent and thoughtful, as usual. At last, his attention seemed to be caught by something in my looks. A glance now and then, half inquisitive, I thought, and so benign, Sophia! The benignity of his eyes was new, was sudden. I had never seen it before. Commonly, his features have been darkened by comfortless reflections. They are commonly austere, but now a ray of sweet benignity seemed luminously to diffuse itself over all his features.

Yet how did I know all this? I, to whom his attention made it only more difficult to look at him. I don't know how: I knew it by sympathy, I believe. I felt my cheeks glow with new embar-

rassment. He said nothing, and quickly retired. How was it, Sophia, that this little incident almost instantly changed my feelings. I went up stairs again to my chamber, but the mood was changed. The heat, the gnats, the dust no longer incommoded me. I was not well, yet my spirits were exalted into heavenly serenity. This man, Sophia, has a soul I am sure he has. I read it in that look. Wrong, you often tell me to judge of men by their looks. Wrong or not, there are cases, when not to judge thus, is impossible. Impossible, at least, for me.

And this it is that pleases me so much. A noble, a beneficent aspect in man is, of all earthly things, the most attractive to my gaze. Do not some say (I think I have been told so) that the Deity possesses a human shape, the man of *this* world being fashioned after the image of the Universal Maker?

Do not smile at me, my friend. Above all, beware, I charge you, of dealing out

unwarrantable inferences, from what I shall tell you. I fear you a great deal, but that shall not hinder me from saying, that to me there appears somewhat *divine* in the face of our guest. 'Tis a book full of sublime and excellent meaning. Methinks I could read in it for ever.

But all the rest of him is fully worthy of his face. I mean his personals. I know but little of the rest. Yet his face tells me much, and indeed his conversation with my brother, has unfolded a few things.

Would to heaven he would deign to talk to me. Yet the very thought of that makes me tremble. What a poor part should I act! What could I say? I know nothing that he knows. I have never been where he has been. And what occurs within my little sphere, is all trifling and despicable. No fit subjects to talk to him upon.

But could I not listen? Methinks I should listen eagerly. I have a great

desire, you know, to learn, and though reading is to me but a dull task, I have always had a great passion for listening. I know I should be, not, indeed, an apt, but a most willing and obsequious scholar. By dint of zeal I might get forward; perhaps rise to something in time.

And how shall I prevail on him to talk? Why not tell him my wishes? Why not ask him to talk? Why not say to him, "Here, sir, is a poor girl who knows nothing, but who wants to know every thing. Have you nothing in all that travelling and books and education have given you, suited to her childish ignorance and incapacity; something which she will be the better for knowing, and which it may not be unamusing to yourself to communicate? You meet her twice or thrice a day. You are obliged to endure her company for a little while—Why not, good sir, devote that little to her benefit?

"She is not a worthless or stupid crea-

ture, I believe. Her heart is composed of fibres that vibrate easily and strongly. They are moved by the least breath, but are touched into harmony by nothing sooner than by gratitude and pity.

"You are not happy, good sir. Will not a docile ear and grateful heart, even in so trivial a thing as I, beguile you of a few moments of uneasiness. While you talk to me, you will cease to think of what which gives you pain."

Now, Sophia, why should I not speak thus to our guest? He would not repulse me, as forward and impertinent, would he? I have a good mind to try; but I know I should never muster up courage.

I wish he would begin with me. In him, it would be condescending, and therefore easy; but in me.—No, I shall never have courage to begin discourse with him. I wish he knew how desirous I am to be talked to. Is there no way indirectly, and by way of hint?

Would I knew something more of him! By that knowledge, perhaps, I might regulate my approaches; and is there no means of knowing? He writes and reads not at all, I believe. One day he opened Mosheim's history, that lay in the window. Something caught his eye for three minutes. He read the page and then left it. Luckily he opened where a shred of linen lay, so that I was able, as soon as he went out, to look at the passage.

I understood not much of it. It talked about a certain Jerome, who was burnt at Constance, for heresy—the disciple of a certain John Huss. What a strange effect, Sophia, has reading upon thy poor friend. It shews me, only more clearly, the extent of my ignorance. Every thing alluded to in this account, was strange to me. I asked myself questions. Where, said I, is Prague? What were the incidents of Zisca's war! Wherefore did the Prince quarrel with his subjects? What did one demand and

the other refuse? And who were they who sat in counsel, and caused the venerable Jerome to be burnt?

Alas! None of these questions was I able to answer. Now Colden, I suppose, has all this in his possession, and, perhaps, would despise me, on finding me so ignorant. Yet why should not a man find pleasure, in removing ignorance, in imparting his knowledge? Suppose I should put those questions to him! Nothing improper, I should think, in that. But whence, would he not ask, could I glean such odd inquiries? What are Zisca, and Jerome, and Bohemian battles to me? Better, surely, exercise my curiosity on other subjects. But what other?

Some, there must be, on which he is able to instruct me: else to put my questions to him would be absurd. Yet why not be inquisitive on the same subjects as he? The Taborites and Calaxtines are as much to me as to another.

They were men, and their fate ought not to excite the less sympathy in us, because they lived a great while ago, and a great way off, if their story be truly and circumstantially told.

Religion, it seems, was the hand that set fire to their passions. Jerome preached a new religion. Many people believed, but the rulers were not convinced, and killed every body that believed like Jerome. I should like to know what it was that Jerome preached, and whether he or the council were in the right. There must have been some very great difference between them surely, to make one so cruel and the other so obstinate.

Will not Mosheim tell me all this? I have half a mind to read the book. If ever Colden should talk to me, how would he be surprised to find me so knowing as this book would make me! Some inducement, too, to speak to me, he observing me thus employed. A

proof, it would be, that my thoughts sometimes rose above the tea-pot and the stew-pan.

Don't be surprised, that I run on thus, Sophia. Don't be angry, especially as I stop merely through compassion to you. I could write twice as much before I sleep, but I must not trust too much to your indulgence. So adieu.

How, Sophia, do you think this morning has been busied? I wish I were near enough to hear your guesses.

"Getting breakfast, I suppose. Attending your mamma.—Working at a wrist-band."

To be sure, but what besides these?

"In reverie, perhaps, while the bed is made and the floor sanded."

Certainly; but what else?

"Why—reading. Yesterday's design,

respecting Mosheim, has been executed. You began to study at last."

No such thing. Sometime hence, perhaps to-morrow, I may begin, but, to-day, I had other business.

"What! Had you a long conversation with your guest? Has the statue opened its mouth at last?"

Ah! Sophy! Would that guess was the true one. But I will tell you what it was.

I awoke pretty early, earlier by far than common. I thought of course, on all that had lately passed. It was a motley, a surprising scene, Sophia. Some parts of it engaged me more than others. Especially Colden's conversations with my brother. All of them (by-the-bye there have been but two in my hearing) were remembered, and now I repeated them to myself.

But, thought I, shall I always remember them so exactly as now. Time, per-

haps, will slowly wear the traces out. A good scheme, to write them down. Then they will always be vivid and at hand. And how can my active pen be better employed? Let me see, what can be done, before breakfast time, this very morning. Full two hours from the dawn of day, till my mother stirs. So I watched the stars till they faded away. Then I got up, and my paper was before me, and my pen in hand, some minutes before the light was strong enough to let me use them. I looked very impatiently at the east. My window gives me a full view of that quarter of the heavens. The air was deliciously cool, and my mind glowed the more fervently on that account.

I soon began to write, and finished my task, I assure thee, before the sweet face of my Hannah (she sleeps in my mother's room) showed itself at my door. A great deal too was to be said, but I hurried forward my pen, minding not my dashes

and my commas. I wrote it for myself alone, yet I will send it to my Sophia, if she wishes it, on condition that she sends it back in due season.

It was done—every syllable of these two talkers was put down, and proud was I of my exploit. What a difference, my friend, between this morning and all my former ones. Methinks that thus to spend every morning would be highly beneficial. Such a contrast would it prove to the molested sleep, the confused dreams, in which my mornings heretofore have been spent.

Yet this is not the first attempt at early rising. I have often determined to rise with the sun; but so drowsy, so comfortless, have I felt, so impatient of my mind's vacancy, and so vainly striving to keep the needle going, that I as often gave up the scheme. Nothing of all this did I now feel. I was all alert, sprightly, impetuous. My thoughts glowed, and as they followed each other

to the pen, my soul was visited, it seemed, by glimpses of a pure, a supernal light. I once, Sophia, thought sewing was pleasant. Lately its reputation has sunk a little with me. I like the pen better.

As usual, I met Colden at breakfast. The remembrance of how I had lately been employed, gave me some credit in my own eyes. Ought it not to give me some? At least, with him?

Why not, thought I once, tell this man what I have been doing? Such a dumb reserve on either side! Justifiable, perhaps in him from his ignorance of what is passing in my heart. Let me pluck up reasonable, decent courage, and break the spell. Once broken, it will never be formed again.

I should have done it, I believe.—A fluttering heart, needless movements of the tea-cup, were preludes which should have ended in a—"Pray, sir, will you be so good as to tell me what religious people mean when they talk of *receiving the*

cup in both kinds? But he left me before the preludes were at an end: sorely to my disappointment. All the courage and tranquillity which I had enjoyed, for a few days, had like to have deserted me. I hemmed and sighed it away, and conquered my dejection the sooner by thus betaking myself to the pen.

Pray send for me, Sophia; pray do. Not a moment longer under this roof—that I am determined. A rude; an insolent—

Faithful pen! Let me intrust to thee, and to my Sophia, all the feelings of this simple and wayward heart. What, O my ungovernable heart, shall I compare thee to?

Tears, scalding tears, tears of indignation; of anger at myself and the world, burst forth, but now my tears rebuked themselves. 'Tis well I have no wit-

nesses to my infirmity. Should I not die with shame if there were? Yet my poor mother thought that something was the matter. The sob, not effectually stifled, the voice, broken and uneven, excited her notice.

"Why, Jessy, my dear, what ails you?"

"Nothing at all mamma. Will you have your gruel now?" stammered I, awkwardly endeavouring thus to draw away her thoughts. And all my tears, for what?

Ah Sophia! You must cast away the frail and perverse Jessica. She merits not thy love. My confession will make it but too evident.

I spent this morning in quieting those scruples that had hitherto, as I imagined, stood so much in the way of conversation with our guest. I persuaded myself to take courage and address myself to him, while at tea. Various questions I thought of, with which I might begin, by asking him. I was at great pains to find out a

suitable question, and when I found it, I weighed very carefully the words I should use. Having settled all these difficult points, I waited, with some impatience, for the evening. It came, at last: and at the usual time, I found myself seated opposite to him at the tea-table.

Methought he was more solemn than usual. There was an air of more disquiet, and greater inattention to me was evident. This discouraged me, a good deal. I felt my resolution sinking. I struggled to keep it alive, and at last, as I held the plate, with a slice of bread, to him, I said—"Pray, Sir"—There I stopped.

His attention was roused. He looked at me with curiosity, and I resumed with a world of hesitation and embarrassment—"Pray, Sir—Yet I am loth to trouble you with such idle questions"—I could not go on. With an air of benignity, he now said—You cannot imagine, Sophia, the sound of his voice—it is awfully sweet,

to my ears, especially when kindly modulated, as it now was—but he said: "All your questions, if I can answer, I will answer cheerfully."

"It was only—I was thinking this morning—what it was—what harm there could be—I forget what it was I wish to know; and to ask so strange a question of you"—

"Pray," said he, with increasing affability, "let me fully know your doubts; I will remove them if I can."

"It was only this. What harm, I thought, this morning, can there be in leaving the Romish religion and turning Protestant, that people must be burnt alive for doing so."

O Sophia! I shudder even now to tell you what followed. Such a propitious beginning to end so!

He started half up, cast a dreadful look at me—uttered not a syllable, but, after a moment's pause, seized his hat and hurried out of the room.

Such was the issue of my foolish experiment. Deeply, and with burning tears, did I lament my folly, my rashness. So blind was I, not to see the impropriety of my inquiry. Yet who would have suspected it to be improper? Sure I am, I intended no ill. But I have done, methought, some bad thing, that he can never forgive. He will change his lodgings to be sure, to avoid being tormented by my impertinent curiosity. Well, well;—Let him go; unaccountable; mysterious—and the sooner he goes the better. Either will be less unhappy in the absence of the other.

O Sophia, these were unhappy moments to me. I could not endure home. I could not bear myself, and went out to walk, though the air was very gloomy and blustering, and big drops of rain began already to fall.

I took, pensively, the way across the fields, towards the Hudson. You know the hill, from the side of which you over-

look Wantsey's Marsh. 'Tis pretty steep, and some old trees are scattered on the edge of it, whose shade is pleasant at noon, and whose covert makes the even-gloom still deeper. I sat me down under one of these, quite thoughtless of the time, and of every thing but Colden's strange demeanour.

The night came on, and I still was seated on a grassy hillock all alone. People frequently ramble here on summer evenings, and a solitary girl like me might well be timid. At other times I should have been so, but now I felt nothing like fear. I thought not once of my situation.

At last, perhaps it was an hour after dark, something happened, I don't know what, to rouse me from my dream. I saw it was a very dark night, so much so, that I feared I should hardly find my way back. Just then, methought, I saw a large figure moving towards this spot, brushing through the long dry grass. I

was full of tremours. My knees shook so much, that I could not, for a moment, get on my feet, yet I dreaded to remain, and wanted to hurry away.

The figure still came on, and when near me, suddenly stopt, observing me, no doubt, and wondering what could induce a girl like me to trust herself alone, at this time of night, so far from home. By this time, I found my feet, and starting up, was going, when the person said, in a tone of surprise, "Jessy Arnot! Is it you?"

O my Sophia! The voice was Colden's. How I trembled. He did not tell me to stop, yet I did stop. I could not move a step farther. I did not answer him either. It seemed as if I had not breath enough to utter a syllable.

He came up to me—"Why," said he, "it is Jessy, indeed. My good girl! You have strayed far."

Good girl! Sophia, in a tone so kind! What a change was here. My heart was

now in greater tumults than ever. Apprehension, joy, surprise, seemed all to swell my bosom at the same time. I could not find words, till he had repeated—"A late hour, Jessy, to be thus far from home."

"It is, indeed," said I, "it was very wrong of me; but I don't know how it was. I walked on without thinking, and sat here, inattentive to the things around me. I shall never do the like again, I am sure."

"No common theme must have engrossed you so much?" said he, in a tone, as I thought, of interrogation.

Now was the trembling fool more embarrassed than ever. Did he suspect what I was musing on? Never, my friend, was there a worse dissembler than thy Jessy. Her heart is in the hand of every one that wishes to have it there.

"Nothing—not much," stammered I,

in a hurry, "I was only sorry—grieved for—because—"

Lord bless me, Sophia, what was I about? Was I going to say how his fierceness had affected me? I suppose I was, and should have said it then, but his anger before, and his kindness now, were too much for me. I could not say more, for tears that impertinently came into my eyes.

His accents betrayed more kindness, as well as some surprise.

"You were sorry; you were grieved, Jessy. For what? May I know the cause?"

"I grieved for my own rashness; for having given anger and pain, by my impertinence; for having met with sharp rebuke, where I meant no ill, and stern repulse, where I sought knowledge."

This hint gave him evident disturbance. He seemed to breathe hard while he spoke.

"No more of that, good girl. I was

the faulty wretch, not you. Allow for my infirmity. It was a freak not to be accounted for, or justified, and I wanted to see you and atone for it. Pass it over; think of it no more, will you?"

Colden thus to humble himself at my feet; to confess himself in error; to ask forgiveness from *me!* I could not answer him, Sophia; I could not, indeed. Marking my unwilling silence (I hope he saw it to be unwilling), he continued:

"Your ingenuous heart must seek a different instructor. I am not worthy to be your teacher. What knowledge you want, I am unable to communicate—"

Here ensued a long pause. It was not for me to break it. Meanwhile, we walked forward, and had, by this time, got into Broadway.

"You know the way now, he said. My path leads me differently." So saying, he left me, and walked quickly away.

I hurried home, wanting the kind soli-

tude of my chamber to think. Sophia? There is something in all this—exalting, shall I call it, to thy poor friend? Bewildering, it surely is. What a crowd of vivid, rapid images, burst in upon my mind.

I have tranquillized myself enough to write thus far, to tell thee what has happened,—but to describe my feelings now, that I leisurely look back upon these incidents, is too hard a task for me. Some other time, I shall be able. To-morrow, perhaps.

Bewitching pen! I can scarcely spare thee from my fingers while I sleep. Night has become more tedious since I have grown accustomed to my quill. More than once, I had like to have risen, gotten a light, and scribbled away upon my pillow.

"How numerous, how troublesome," said a neighbour, "are the musquitoes grown of late. For them and the heat

one can scarcely get a wink of sleep. Don't you find it so, Miss Arnot? last night especially."

"Me! O dear! no. Their buzzing and their stinging vex not me. Last night I hardly slept a wink, to be sure, but I do not thank the musquitoes for that.

"Oh! what a light, what a bounding heart is mine! It would not lie still enough to let me sleep."

* * * * *

THE SCRIBBLER.

THE SCRIBBLER.

WHAT a name is this! And to be conferred by a man on himself! Yet this is frequently the best policy. The surest way to preclude, is to anticipate censure; for no one will think it worth while to call a poor culprit by names which the culprit has liberally and unceremoniously given himself.

I never, for my part, presumed to aspire after a more honourable name. I never took up pen but to please myself, and the idlers that were willing to attend to me. Others may wish to edify a congregation of sages by their wisdom, or call the human swine from his sensual

banquet, to feast upon the pearls of their rhetoric; or to charm an audience of enthusiasts by a tale of pathos, elaborately simple, or a ditty ruefully sweet or wildly melancholy, but as to me, I do not gaze wishfully at such heights. The common level must content me. The harp of Orpheus I dare not touch. As unambitious as a chimney-sweep, I shall be sufficiently happy if I can give a tolerable twang to a Jew's-harp.

I have no fortress from which I may boldly look out, and securely defy the critical assailant. A poor beggarly wight whose whole wealth is his pen: a minstrel, friendless as Edwin of immortal memory, but, alas! with none of his divine endowments; with none of that music that melted the fiercest hearts to charity, and turned the most obdurate or mischievous foes into adorers or disciples.

Let no one imagine therefore, that on this occasion, I pretend to write. No, I

shall only scribble, and those who look for entertainment from my performances will be egregiously deceived. In every form that I shall take, in every theme that I shall choose, I shall not be able to belie my parentage. The star that ruled at my birth, in all my pilgrimage and all my metamorphoses, will shine upon me still, and my fate has decreed that I shall be nothing but a scribbler.

"Ah! Jenny! these are hard times, but ours is no extraordinary lot. Heavy as the burden is on us, there are thousands on whom the load is heavier still, while the shoulders, on which it is laid, are far less able to sustain it, than ours.

"A feeble consolation, thou sayest is that, and feeble it is. To find comfort in distress, from thinking on the greater distresses of others whose merits are much less than ours, is but a selfish way of judging, for, why should we be comforted by such reflections?

When I was a boy, a froward wretch,

whom I met on the highway, thought proper to be angry at some jest that escaped me, and snatching up a pebble about half the size of my fist, knocked me down with it. My skull was fractured by the blow, and I was a long time in getting well. While sick, an ideot that strolled about the village, chanced to stroll into my chamber. Somebody, in answer to his questions, gave him an account of my mishap. The historian out-did Tacitus in brevity, for the whole tragedy was summed up in, "Why, Dick the waggoner broke his head with a brick-bat."

"Bless me," said the fool, "what a mercy that it was not a mill stone."

Jenny smiled and said: "A remark truly worthy of an ideot."

"And yet (resumed I) foolish as it was, it struck me, as I listened, very forcibly. Dick the waggoner, to be sure, was no Ajax. Rocks were no *missiles* to him, but my thoughts did not

run upon the possibility of the evil. I was really consoled by thinking that a larger stone or a better aim might have doubled or trebled the injury, or perhaps made it utterly irreparable. And why, since I was comforted, be very curious in weighing the justice or wisdom of the consolation. That wisdom that lessens joy, or enhances sorrow, is not worth our praise. Cheer up, my dear girl, and if thou can'st find no comforter but folly, think it only folly to be wise."

Such was the dialogue that just now passed between Jenny and me. Jenny, you must know, reader, is my sister, and a good girl she is; the best in the world. Abundant cause have I to say so, for without her, long ago should I have soundly slept in my grave: or have undergone a much worse destiny. Without her healing tenderness or salutary council, I should long ago have yielded to the ill-suggestions of poverty, and have done that which is forbidden, or

have shared the debtors' portion in a prison, or have sunk to my last sleep in a pestilential hospital.

My Jenny is a sort of good angel to me, never wanting at the point of utmost need. What a sweet face is her's, and what music was ever so heart cheering as her "good morrow, brother!" Tired, drooping, almost lifeless after the day's toil, to hear her sing, or ramble with her, are my sweetest consolations.

But how am I run away with by this bewitching theme! My own fortunes and my sister's praise I do love to dwell upon. Yet strange it is, that I should talk thus publicly on such themes — I, that have my pride and my scruples, like others; but my contrivance here has saved my pride, and gratified my darling passion. I can write about myself, and even publish what I write, without risking any exposure; for nobody that reads this will ever know the writer.

Perhaps, reader, you want to know my

name and dwelling. Now these are the only things that I am anxious to hide. My character and history I have no objection to disclose; nay, it would give me pleasure to tell them, but I do not wish to be known by name and abode.

But what new suggestion of vanity is this? To imagine that any curiosity will be felt for him from whose pen these crudities flow, or that any interest can be awakened in enlightened bosoms for the fortunes of the Scribbler!

Yet why not? I have a little vanity, that is certain. Not the most contemptible of heaven's creatures, am I; good parts in me, I verily believe; a towardly, prompt spirit, to give myself my due, that will expand and ripen as I grow older. As yet, I am a mere boy, for whose deficiencies, as well as for whose vanity, some allowances will not be withheld by the charitably wise.

I have, at this moment, a great desire to be known to thee my friend; to thee,

with thy benignant smiles, who art, just now, perusing this page. I hope thou art a woman, for if so, softness and compassion are interwoven with thy feelings as intimately as bright threads in a particoloured whoof. Methinks I hear thee sigh, and see thy eye glisten. Would to heaven I was near enough to testify my gratitude, and bid the compassionate drop flow; to assure thee that the writer of this is not unworthy thy regard; but that must never be. I shall never be to thee aught but a phantom. A something ideally existent, and without a name or local habitation.

Not that I should be averse to know thee for my friend, but how to discover thy good will; how to bring myself within thy ken, is the insuperable difficulty. Perhaps, I might be somehow useful to thee. I might run of thy errands, might carry thy provision-basket on market days, or harness thy pair of bays to thy phæton. But no. For that

I was not born, I will never be a slave to fetch and carry, to fatten upon fragments, even from thy plate; to sit upon the kitchen hearth, with trencher on my lap, and eat, full in the envious eyes of Towser, who, the while, is squatted opposite, and grudges me every vile morsel.

Perhaps, thou needest a more honourable service; art smitten with a passion for some fashionable knowledge; to prate a little French, or shew a pretty finger on the harpsichord, or flourish off a billet with a little more correctness of spelling, more evenness of lines; and with characters a little less like Arabic, may have awakened thy ambition. In such a case, I do not know but I might eat thy bread and not be choked by it. Otherwise, this pine board and this black loaf are sweeter by far.

I gleaned a little Latin from a well taught uncle, but he went to sea, before I had made much way, and I never saw him more. Then Telemaque fell in my

way, and by aid of a Dictionary, I and Jane hammered out its meaning. Now what little I know of these languages I would gladly teach another. But alas! I know too little of that or any thing else, to pretend to teach them to others. I myself am a learner, and the lesson I have most need to study is that of being content with my lot.

Methinks I blush to mention what is just now the subject of my thoughts. Even to trust it to paper, when the name of the writer is invisible, as mine shall always be, is somewhat difficult. Whence does this reluctance to acknowledge our poverty arise?

But this is a phantastic impulse, and therefore I will fight with it. I am poor, indeed, but through no fault of mine. I am not wanting in industry, and this enables me, in conjunction with my sister's labour, to live. Yes, we are able to live. I have never gone without a meal, merely for want of money to procure it. We

have eaten and drunk at the usual times, and our meal has never been so scanty that we were obliged to desist before the appetite was fully satisfied.

True it is, that our hunger obtains no edge from the delicacy of our viands or luxuriance of our cookery. Our feast is coarse enough, God knows, but then it is wholesome, and habit has somewhat reconciled us to it. Once our palates were fastidious. No breakfast would serve our turn but the choicest products of the east and west. Coffee, transparent as air, with fragments from the snow-white loaf and the richest of the cow's yielding, were necessary to our comfort. Now the case is altered, but what lesson so hard that necessity will not make easy? Indian meal sprinkled in boiling water, in a wooden dish, and a couple of pewter spoons, make but a sorry show; but sorry or not, what says our hard fate? Take this or go without.

How strange it is! This is a bitter

morsel to me, but I never loathe it on my own account; only on Jane's. When I see the spoon lifted to her lips, something rises in my throat. I cannot swallow. For a minute I am obliged to restore the morsel to the plate.

Jane was not born to this. No more was I, and it goes hard enough with me; harder by much than with Jane; and yet it is only when I think upon my sister thus reduced, that my heart is wrung with true anguish. Methinks these ills would be light, if she did not share them with me, yet that is a foolish thought, for without her I should long ago have done some cowardly and desperate act.

Now I want a hat. I have worn this eighteen months or more, and with all my care and dressing it has grown disreputably shabby; but I cannot afford to buy a new one. If I could, if I had six dollars to spare, I would not bestow them on myself. Jane should have them, and, in truth, she needs them most. She

will not allow that she does, but I am sure of it, and have them she should.

I once loved to see her dressed. When fortune smiled, she did not scruple to adorn that lovely form with the best skill of the milliner. Now she is unadorned. What then was lavished upon ornament, must now be husbanded for necessary purposes. And is not that right? With what conscience can we spend in mere luxury what would clothe another's nakedness, and feed another's hunger?

How frivolous too are these regrets! The graces that nature and that virtue gave her she cannot lose. Does this sorry garb lessen her in my eyes? No. Of what then do I complain? I am anxious for her gay and opulent appearance in the eyes of others. And is there any thing but folly in that? Those who value her the less for the plainness of her garb, are of no value themselves. The reverence of such is ignominy. So says

reason, but, alas! my heart at this moment denies the truth of the saying.

But how shall I supply my want in this respect? Shall I beg? Can't do that; no, no. That will never do. Yet there are many ways of begging; some less ignominious and disagreeable than others.

How many good men in this city, should they become, by any means, acquainted with my condition, would hasten to supply my need? And this they would do in a manner the most delicate; the least offensive to my pride. A new hat, perhaps, would be left at my lodgings, by the servant of such a manufacturer. I go to him, and ask him wherefore he sent his hat to me? He answers that a gentleman, unknown to him, called an hour before, paid for the hat, and directed it to be sent to such a number, in C—— Street, naming the number of my lodgings.

I could not accept the boon, yet how

should I elude it in the case that I have mentioned? Obliged perhaps to acquiesce, for the purchaser is no where to be found, and the hatter therefore knows no one to whom he may send the hat or repay the money. I should, by no means, confide the true state of the case to the hatter. I should try to detect the generous buyer, and have the hat left, without a message, at his house. Yet should I not act like this imaginary benefactor in a like case? Certainly I should.

What then but a weak and culpable pride would hinder me from accepting the gift? Yet my scruples are confined to myself. For myself I cannot condescend to ask an alm, but for my Jane, methings I could importunately beg from door to door, and all day long.

Why truly, sister, I have no objection; but first, I must dispatch my daily scribble. Content thyself the while with a look out from thy window. This is a

more amusing employment than I thought it would prove. What importance does it give; to have one's idle reveries clothed with the typographical vesture, multiplied some thousand fold, and dispersed far and wide among the race of readers! I wonder the scheme never occurred to me before.

Jane, much to my chagrin, condemns my scheme. "Nobody," says she, "will read your scribble, or nobody whose attention or whose praise is of any value. And to what end do you write? It profits you nothing. It enlarges not, by the bulk of a cent, the day's scanty earnings. Are you not fatigued enough by ten hours' writing, that you must add thus voluntarily to the task? Throw your pen into the fire, and come with me. You know I must have exercise to keep me alive, and I cannot walk out alone."

"Presently, my dear girl. Eight or ten minutes more, and I shall have done.

What matters the addition of a few minutes to the labours of the day? I derive pleasure from scribbling thus. It is a mental recreation, more salutary to the jaded spirits than a ramble in the fields, or a contemplation of the starry heavens. I like it better than walking and conversing with my only friend, but there is time enough for both to be done. And are you sure that what I write nobody reads? Every sort of curiosity exists in the world, and some, methinks, there are, who cast an eye, not without some little interest, even upon my scribble."

Is it the brilliancy of wit, the solidity of argument, or the dignity of narrative only, which can hope for an intelligent audience? Are there not moments of vacuity best filled up by the milder effusions of an artless, unsophisticated pen? No mind is at all times overflowing. There is a tide in its sensations; and its richest streams, swelling and impetuous for a

while, will occasionally check their course, and will ebb as rapidly away.

It is not for me, indeed, to speculate on history, or politics, or morals; these are of greatest moment, and wise men will bestow most of their time and thoughts upon them, but intervals must now and then occur in the life of the most devoted to the toils of gain or of science, when nothing can more suitably be offered than a light repast, prepared by such a superficial, though unspoiled, wit as mine! At any rate, I please myself, and while that is the case, Jenny, you must give me leave to write on.

Jane is not vanquished by logic such as this. She still insists upon my strolling with her on the battery. How can I, she asks, resist the invitation of so soft a breeze? If I prefer to ply a useless quill, by this farthing taper, she will pity me and go out alone.

Why Jane, be not displeased. I can

write and walk with thee too. Stop, my girl, thou shalt not go out alone. I love thy company too much to suffer thy solitary rambles. I love this balmy air around, and these glimmering lustres above us, too much to stay within doors, in so sweet a twilight as this.

Yet thy panics, sister, are idle ones. Thou can'st not walk alone, it seems, and why not? Are not these Americans a civilised nation? Is it requisite, in order to screen a female from injury, that a champion should always walk beside her? Is every man, at these hours, a wild beast prowling for his prey, and ready to fall upon every innocent unguarded by a wild beast like himself?

You bring these fears from the other side of the Atlantic, and from that overgrown and flagitious city where thou and I passed our youth. There, there was a real inconvenience to be dreaded by a female who should venture to explore the

streets alone after night fall; but here, surely the case is widely different; here is all security and peace, and the most timorous of thy sex might rove in safety and alone from the Bowery-house to Albany pier, at any time of the night.—You doubt the truth of my assertion, do you? Well; no matter; while I have life, thou shalt never put its truth to the test of experiment. In every part of life's rough road, I will always be posted at thy side, and to the utmost of my little power, be thy guardian and thy friend.

Foolish boaster that I am! Instead of giving, I have only received counsel and advice from thee. The poor prerogatives of sex have sunk beneath thy superiority in intelligence and virtue; not for fortitude alone, but for my virtue, for my very life, am I my sister's debtor! The time will come when I shall be able to repay her benefit; I am sure it will, and the proposal of such a time gives me courage

to endure the present evil: yet for that very courage, for that very hope, am I indebted to my sister's keener foresight and more steadfast resolution.

"True, as thou sayest, I have written enough, and now having done my scribble I will stroll with thee."

* * * * *

THE END.

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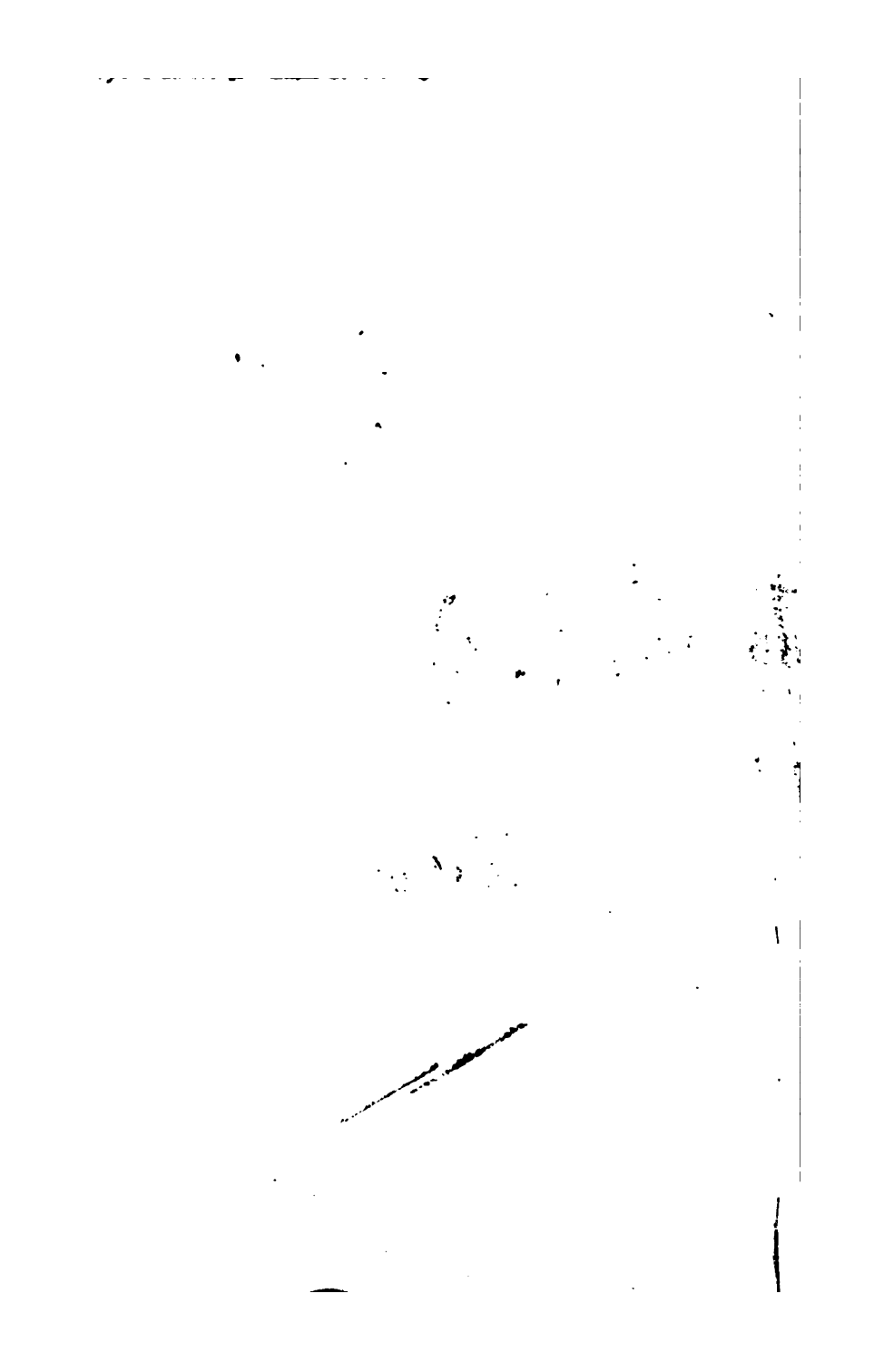

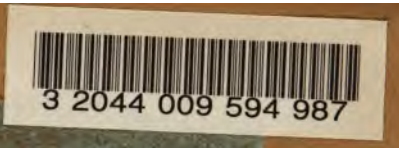

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